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AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

FOR

MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. XXI

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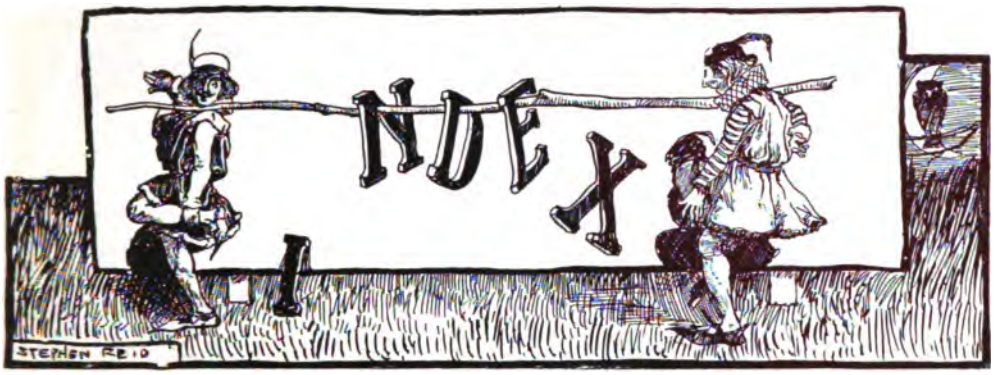

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THE SEQUEL TO "SHE"

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THE

KEELEY TREATMENT

For the Cure of Alcohol and Drug Inebriety.

THE Keeley treatment has been employed in this country for many years under the auspices of a Committee of broad-minded men of affairs, who have satisfied themselves by personal investigation, not only of the efficacy of the Cure, but of its permanency in nearly every case. This Committee is composed of the following gentlemen, the Chairman being the Rev. James Fleming, B.D., Canon of York, Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty the King; Mr. W. Hind-Smith, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations, Exeter Hall, London; Lord Braye; Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who keep in constant touch with the operations of the Keeley Institute. Here are some facts from prominent men regarding the Keeley Cure for the Drink and Drug Habit.

"It really cures. It does what it professes to do." Such is the emphatic testimony of Mr. Eardley-Wilmot, the well-known secretary of the Church of England Temperance Society, who for some years has had the Keeley method under close observation in this country. He adds: "I do not wish to use high-flown language, but really and truly I look upon the Keeley cure as a modern miracle." And then he tells how case after case that had been considered hopeless has yielded speedily to the Keeley Cure, the patients returning to their work full of vigour, and happy in the restoration of all that makes life worth living.

He has sent bad cases which his Society were unable to deal with. These cases numbered in all forty, and Mr. Eardley-Wilmot says that out of these only four have lapsed, while the remaining thirty-six recovered, and have been total abstainers ever since.

Furthermore, Mr. W. Hind-Smith, of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations, declares that in his opinion, after ten years of constant service on the investigating Committee of the Keeley Cure, it is the only effective cure for chronic alcoholism and drug addiction of which he is aware.

Why does the inebriate continue to drink? He drinks because he is a slave of alcohol. He is no more responsible for drinking—when a drunkard—than a man is for having a chill or fever when he is poisoned by malaria. The Inebriate will stop drinking for a few days, or weeks, or months, perhaps. You may say then, Why not stop continuously? But this is a law of the disease of alcoholism. A man may have an attack of ague, and may then go two days, or a week, or two or three weeks, or even a year, without a paroxysm. You may say, If a man can throw off the disease for a week, or a month, or a year, why can't he do so continuously? The reason he can't is because the nature of the disease is to cause these paroxysms periodically. If the malarial disease is cured, the paroxysms will cease for ever, and the same law is found to hold good with alcoholism.

The man so diseased will continue to drink rhythmically. His persistence in drinking is a part of, and a main part of, his disease. Can we make it clear and plain to you why a drunkard will continue to drink in spite of everybody and everything good? I think if we examine the laws of disease relating to the action of poisons, and compare them with similar laws in the physical and mental world, that we can make the question and its answer plainly understood.

It is true that his disease is caused by alcohol; but it is also true that in this disease, when once it is established, alcohol is a necessity. The Inebriate is diseased because he drank whisky with his friends, or socially, or took it as a medicine, or for any reason whatever that caused him to begin drinking; but he continues to drink because his disease DEMANDS alcohol.

Persons prevent epidemics by fighting their rhythmical returns. They combat disease by interposing remedies which break up the settled rhythms of chill and fever.

Right here is the secret of the cure of inebriety. The chronic inebriate acquires a resistance to alcohol when he has a drunken bout. His family, friends, his will, and his tissue cells resist it. All these things make such an impression on his mind that he stops drinking for a while. But these resisting forces lose their power in time, and then the clamour of tissue cells for alcohol is again predominant, and he goes off again on another spree.

From this standpoint a drunkard is made up of the rhythmical predominance of all the forces which lead him to drink, and of the forces which prevent him from drinking. If all these forces could remain equal, he would be naturally cured; but they never remain equal. The Keeley remedy breaks up this rhythm. It puts the inebriate into an entirely new sphere, externally and internally. It is very like, and just as effectual as giving a man who has the ague a quantity of quinine and a change of climate. It breaks up the regular swing of the pendulum which ticks against sobriety at one extreme and into debauchery at the other.

The principles of it are easily explained. The man or woman upon whom has fallen the disease of intemperance goes to the Keeley Institute as he or she would go to any hospital or nursing-home. They go of their own free will, or they are not admitted. If they do not wish to be cured, the administrators of the Institute will have none of them. Even when they consent to come, they are left free agents to go in and out at will, so long as they are there at stated hours of the day when the treatment is administered.

The treatment takes four weeks, and is carried out in the United Kingdom only at the Keeley Institute, 8 and 9, West Bolton Gardens, London, S.W. It consists of hypodermic injections four times a day, and Dr. Keeley's remedies, which are taken every two hours during the day.

At the beginning of the treatment the patient is provided with a liberal amount of the best whisky, if he desires it; or, if the addiction be in the category of drugs, the accustomed dose is allowed, but after two or three days the old craving for alcohol disappears for good and all; for drugs it takes longer.

About one-third of the patients are ladies, all of whom have apartments outside the Institute, of their own selection.

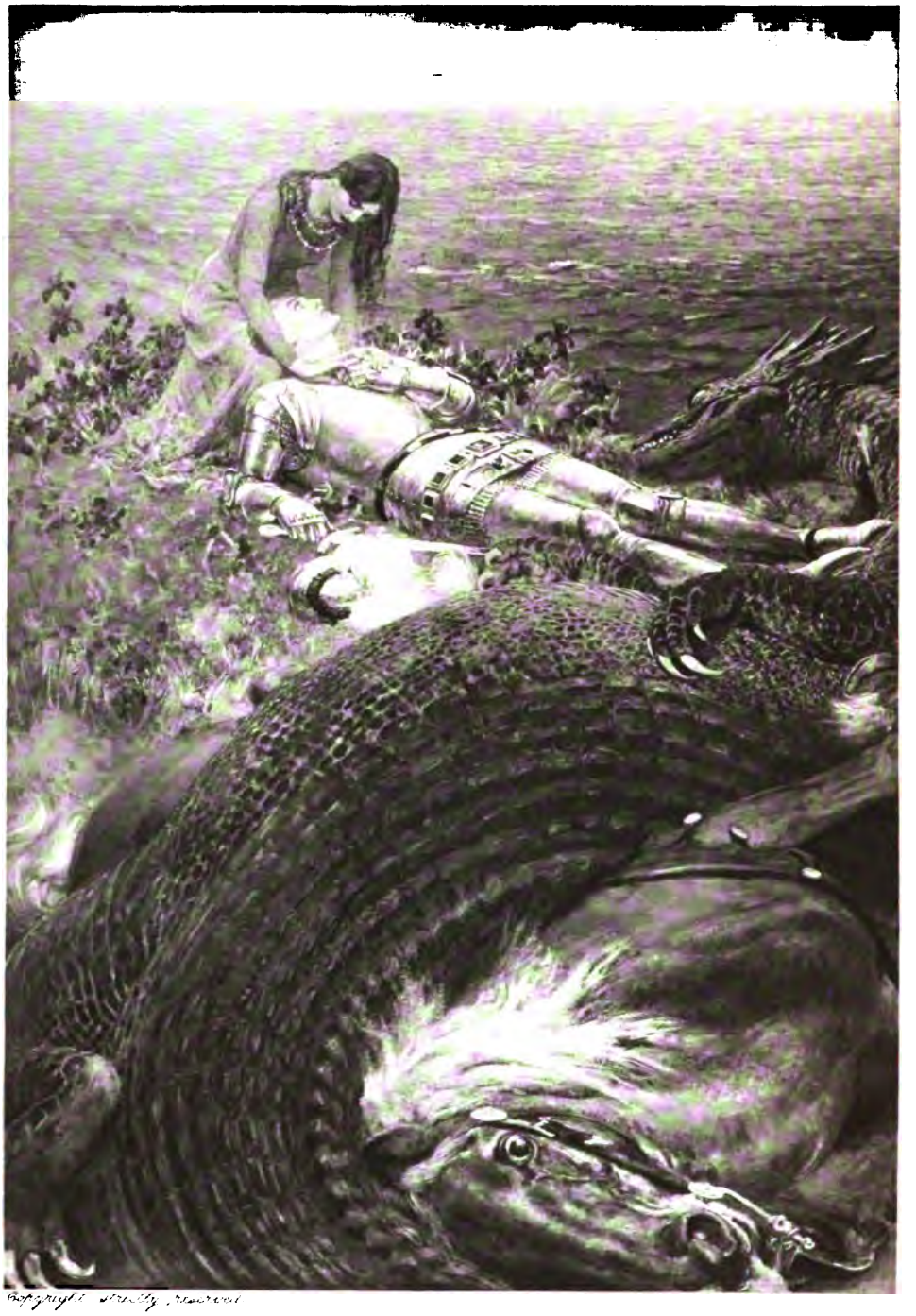
A discerning British public appreciates hard facts. The published Annual Reports of Canon Fleming's Committee can be had for the asking. These reports are highly interesting, containing, as they do, authentic information as to the cures effected, whether the trouble had been alcoholism, morphinism, or nervous prostration.

Some of the patients had been victims to the drink or drug habit for very many years. Cures are the rule, and, what is more, they are permanent. Among the patients are physicians, lawyers, clergymen, journalists, and men generally who do the brain work of the world.

Any inquiries should be addressed to The Secretary, 9, West Bolton Gardens, in Old Brompton Road, London, S.W., which is the only address.

This is the only Keeley Institute in the British Isles.

[*Facing back of plate.*



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A TOUR OF INSPECTION.

By RUDYARD KIPLING.*

PURE vanity took me over to Agg's cottage with my new 18-h.p. Decapod in search of Henry Salt Hinchcliff, E.R.A., who appreciates good machinery.

"He's down the coast with Agg and the cart," said Pyecroft, sitting in the doorway nursing Agg's baby, who in turn nursed the cat. "What's come to your steam-pinnace that we marooned the bobby with? † *Mafeesh?* Sold? Well, I pity the buyer, whoever he is; but it don't seem to me, in a manner o' speaking, that this navy-coloured beef-boat with the turtle-back represents what you might technically call lugshury."

"That's only a body that the makers have sent down. The real one's at home: we shall put it on to-morrow. It is all varnish and paint, like a captain's galley."

"Much more my style," said Pyecroft, putting down the baby. "Where are you bound?"

"Just about and about. We're running trials," I replied.

He looked at the dust-covered, lead-painted road-body, with the single tool-box seat where the tonneau should have been; at Leggatt, my engineer, attired like a rat-catcher turned groom, and rested his grave eyes on my disreputable dust-coat, gaiters, and cap. Then he went indoors, to return in a short time clad in blue civilian serge and a black bowler.

"Aren't there regulations?" I said. "You look like a pilot."

"Or a police inspector," murmured Leggatt.

"Decency forbids," said he, climbing into the back seat, "or I might say somethin' about coalin'-rig an' lighters."

Leggatt turned down a lever, and she flung half a mile of road behind her with a silky purr.

"No—not lighters," said Pyecroft. "She's a destroyer. She licked up that last stretch like an Italian eatin' macaroni."

He stood up and steadied himself by a pole in the middle of the front seat which carried the big acetylene lamp.

"Why, this is like the periscope gadget on the Portsmouth submarines. Does she dive?" said he.

"No, fly!" I said, and we proved it over a bare upland road (this was in the days before the numbering of the cars) that brought us within sight of the summer sea.

Pyecroft pointed automatically to the far line of silver. "The beach is always a good place," he said. "An' it's goin' to be a warm day."

So we took the fairest of counties to our bosom for an easy hour; rocking through deep-hedged hollows where the morning's coolth still lingered; electrifying the fine dust of a league of untempered main road; bathing in the shadows of overarching park timber; slowing through half-built, liver-coloured suburbs that defiled some exploited hamlet; speculating in front of wonderful houses all fresh from the middle parts of *Country Life;* or shooting a half-vertical hill from mere delight in the Decapod's power, but always edging away towards the good southerly blue.

Among other things, I remember, we discussed the new naval reforms. Pyecroft's criticisms would have been worth votes to any Government. He desired what he called "a free gangway from the lower deck to the admiral's stern walk"—the career open to the talents.

"An' they'd better begin now," he concluded, "for to this complexion will it come at last, 'Oratio. Three weeks after war breaks out, the painstakin' and meritorious admirals will have collapsed, owin' to night work and reflecting on their responsibilities to the taxpayer, takin' with them seventy-five per cent. of the ambitious but aged captains. The junior ranks, not carin' two straws for the taxpayer, an' sleepin' where they can, will survive, in conjunction with the gunner, the boatswain, an' similar petty an' warrant officers, 'oo will thus be seen commandin' first, second, an' third-class cruisers *seriatim.*"

"That's rather a bold prophecy."

"Prophecy be blowed!" said Pyecroft, leaning on the light-pole and sweeping the landscape with my binoculars, which had slung themselves round his neck five minutes

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† See "Steam Tactics."

after our departure. "It's what's goin' to happen."

"Meaning you'd take the Channel Fleet into action?" I suggested.

"*Setteris paribus*—the others being out of action, I'd 'ave a try. Hinchcliff, or the engine-room staff, would be where poor Tom Bowling's body was, an' one man's orders down the speakin'-tube is very like another's. Besides, think o' the taxpayer's feelin's. What 'ud you say to me if I came flyin' back to the beach signallin' for a commissioned officer to continue the battle—there bein' two warrants an' one carpenter still survivin'? 'Tain't common-sense—in the Navy. Hullo! Here's the Channel! Bright and beautiful, an' bloomin' 'ard to live with—as usual."

We had swung over a steep, oak-crowned ridge, and overlooked a map-like stretch of marsh ruled with roads, ditches, and canals that ran off into the still noonday haze on either hand. At our feet lay Wapshare, that was once a port, and even now commanded a few dingy keels. Southerly, five or six miles across the levels, the sea whitened faintly on grey-blue shingle spaced with martello-towers. As the car halted for orders, the decent breathing of the Channel was broken by a far-away hiccough out of the heat haze.

"Big guns at Lydd," said Pyecroft. "They'll have some triflin' errors due to mirage this forenoon. Well, I handle such things for a livin'. We needn't go there. What's yonder—three points on the port bow, between those towers?"

He pointed to a batch of tall-chimneyed buildings at the very edge of the wavering beach.

"I believe it has something to do with making concrete blocks for some big Admiralty works down the coast," I answered.

"A thirsty job, with the lime flyin' an' the heat strikin' off the shingle. What a lot of 'ard work one misses on leaf! It looks cooler below here," he said, and waved a hand.

We slid into Wapshare, which, where the jerry-builder has left it alone, precisely resembles an illustration in a mediæval missal. Skirting the shade of its grey flint walls, we found ourselves on a wharf above a doubtful-minded tidal river and a Poole schooner—she was called the *Esther Grant*—surrounded by barges of fireclay for the local potteries.

"All asleep," said Pyecroft, "like a West India port. Let's go down the river. There's a sort of road on one side—out where that barge is lyin'."

We trundled along a line of wooden offices, crackling in the heat, seeing here and there a shirt-sleeved clerk. Then a policeman stopped us.

"Can't come any further," he said. "This is Admiralty ground, and that's an explosives-barge yonder." He glanced curiously at Pyecroft and the severe outlines of my car.

"That nothin'. I know all about the Admiralty—at least, they know all about me."

"Perhaps if you told me——" the policeman began.

"But I don't think I'll inspect stores to-day." Pyecroft leaned back and folded his arms royally. "What are your instructions? Repeat 'em in a smart and lifelike manner."

"To allow nobody beyond this barrier," the policeman began obediently, "unless certain that he is a duly authorised agent of the Admiralty."

"That's me. I've been one for eighteen years."

"To allow no communication of any kind, wines, spirits, or tobacco, from any quarter to the barge, and to see that the watchman does not come ashore till properly relieved, after searchin' the relief for wine, tobacco, spirits, cigar, or matches."

Pyecroft nodded with slow approval.

"I've heard it come quicker off the tongue in—in other quarters, but that will do. I'm not a martinet, thank 'Eaven. Now let us inspect 'im from a safe distance."

He turned the binoculars on the lonely barge a quarter of a mile away, where a man sat under a coachman's umbrella holding his head in his hands.

"If I was any judge," he said, "I'd say that our friend yonder was recoverin' from the effects of what I've heard called a bosky beano."

"Oh, no, sir," said the policeman hurriedly—"at least, nothing to signify. 'E 'asn't got a drop now. He's only the watchman."

"He's taken two large laps out o' that bucket beside 'im since I've had 'im under observation. It is now," he unshackled a huge watch, "eleven twenty-seven. The *prima facie* evidence is that 'e got that grievous mouth last night about two a.m. What's in the barge? Shells?" he said, turning to the half-petrified policeman.

"No. No ammunition comes here, sir. It's only the Admiralty dynamite for the works down the coast. Sixteen tons with fuses—waitin' for the Government tug to tow 'em round when the tide makes. He

isn't the regular crew. He's one of the watchmen. He's relieved at four."

"But where's his red flags?" said Pyecroft suddenly. "A powder-barge ought to 'ave two."

"Why, they aren't there!" said the policeman, as though he observed the deficiency for the first time.

"'He's down the coast with Agg and the cart,' said Pyecroft."

"H'm," said Pyecroft. "They must 'ave been the banner he fought under last night, or else he pawned 'em for drink." He passed me the binoculars. "There he dives again! One imperial quart o' warnish water an' sixteen ton o' dynamite to sober up on—in this 'eat. Give me cells any day."

"You—you won't report it, sir, will you? He's only the watchman—not a regular 'and," the policeman urged.

I saw Leggatt's shoulders shake. Pyecroft wrapped himself up in his virtue.

"I have not yet been officially informed there's anything to report," he answered ponderously. "The man's present and correct. You've searched 'im?"

"That I assure you I 'ave," said the policeman.

"Then there's no evidence he ain't drinkin' for a cure—or a bet. I don't believe in seein' too much; an' speakin' as one man to another, from the soles o' my feet upwards I pity the beggar!"

The policeman expanded like one blue lotus of the Nile.

"Yes," he said. "You've seen the miserablest man in Wapshare. 'E can't drink nor smoke. I'm the next, because I can't, either—on my beat. I was 'opin' when I saw you, you'd exceed the legal limit——"

"That isn't necessary, is it?" I said.

"'Tis with me. I 'ave a conscience. Then I'd 'ave to stop you, and then—so I thought till I saw who you was—you'd 'ave to bribe me."

"What's it like at the 'Fuggle Hop'?" I demanded. We were very hot where we stood. The policeman looked irresolutely at Pyecroft, who naturally echoed the sentiments.

"Not so good as at the ''Astings Smack,' if I might be allowed," and, alluring to brighter realms, the policeman himself led the way back.

"He takes you for some sort of inspector," I said.

"Haven't I answered 'is expectations?" Pyecroft retorted. "Where'd you find another Johnty 'ud let him drink on 'is beat?"

"It's the boots," said Leggatt. "The boots and those tight blue clothes."

It was very good at the "Hastings Smack." The policeman took his standing, but we withdrew with ours and some lunch (summer pubs are full of flies) to the shade of a deserted coal-wharf by the Poole schooner.

"This is what I call a happy ship an' a good commission," said Pyecroft, brushing away the crumbs. "Last time we motored together, we 'ad zebras an' kangaroos, if I remember right. 'Ere we 'ave, as the poet so truly sings—

> "Beef when you are hungry,
> Beer when you are dry,
> Bed when you are sleepy,
> An' 'eaven when you die.

Three more mugs will just do it."

The potboy brought four, and a mariner with them—a vast and voluminous man all covered with china-clay, whose voice was as the rolling of hogsheads over planking.

"Have you seen my mate?" he thundered.

"No," said Pyecroft above the half-raised mug. "What might your Number One have been doin' recently?"

"Drink — desertion — refusal o' lawful

orders, an' committin' barratry with a public barge. Put that in your pipe an' smoke it. I see you're a man o' principles. I may as well tell you here an' now—or now an' 'ere, as I should rather say—that I'm a Baptist; but if you was to tell me that God ever made a human man in Cardiff, I'd—I'd—I'd dissent from your principles. Attend to me! The Welsh 'appened at the change of watch when the Devil took charge o' the West coast. *That* was when the Welsh 'appened. I hope none o' you gentlemen are Welsh, because I can't dissent from my principles."

None of us were Welsh at that hour.

"He seems a gay bird, your mate," said Pyecroft.

"If I wasn't a Baptist, an' he wasn't my cousin, besides bein' part owner of the *Esther Grant* (it comes to 'im with a legacy), I'd say he was a red-'eaded, skim-milk-eyed, freckle-jawed, stern-first-talkin', Cardiff booze-hound. That's just what I'd say o' Llewellyn. Attend to me! I paid five pounds for him at Falmouth only last winter for compound assault or fracture or whatever it was; an' all 'e can do to show 'is gratitude is to go an' commit barratry with a public barge."

"He would," said Pyecroft, but this crime was new to me, and I asked eagerly for particulars.

"I gave him 'is orders last night when 'e couldn't 'ave been more than moist. Last night I told 'im to take a barge o' clay to the potteries 'ere. Potteries—one barge. 'E might 'ave got drunk afterwards. I'd 'ave said nothing—it's against my principles—but 'e couldn't lay 'is course even *that* far. They come to me this mornin' from the potteries—look——" he pulled out papers, a dozen, from several pockets and waved them—"they wrote me an' they telephoned me at the wharf askin' where that barge was, because she was missin'. Now, I ask you gentlemen, *do* I look as if I kept barges up my back? 'E'd committed barratry clear enough, 'adn't 'e?"

"Plain as a pikestaff," said Pyecroft.

"That bein' so, I want to know where my legal liability for the missin' barge comes in?"

"Just what I'd ha' thought," said Pyecroft.

"Besides, 'tisn't as if I used their pottery, either."

There are times when I despair of training Leggatt to my needs. At this point he got up and fled choking.

"When I catch Master Llewellyn, I've my own bill to settle, too. He's broken the 'eart of a baker's dozen of my whisky. You'd never be drinkin' cold beer 'ere if 'e 'adn't. You'd be on the *Esther Grant* quite 'appy by now. Four bottles 'e went off with! Four bottles for a hymn-singin', 'arp-strummin', passive-resistin' Nonconformist who talks a non-commercial language to 'is wife! But I ain't goin' to pander to 'is family any more. If you run across 'im, tell 'im that I'll knock 'is red 'ead flush with 'is shoulders. Tell 'im I'll pay fifteen pounds for 'im this time. *'E'll* know what I mean. A red-'eaded, goat-shanked, saucer-eared, fig-nosed, banana-skinned, Cardiff booze-hound answerin' to the name

"'I'd say he was a red-'eaded, skim-milk-eyed, freckle-jawed, stern-first-talkin', Cardiff booze-hound.'"

o' Llewellyn. You can't miss 'im. 'Ave you got it all down?"

"Every word," I said.

The policeman entered the shed, followed by Leggatt, and I closed the notebook I was using so shamelessly.

"Excuse me," said the policeman, addressing the audience at large, "but a gentleman outside wants to speak to the owner of the car."

"I can testify in their behalf," said the mariner. "Blow 'igh, blow low or sugared by his mate, Captain Arthur Dudeney'll testify in your be'alf unless it 'appens to be a Welshman. The Welsh 'appened at the change o' watch when the Devil——"

"Drop it, you fool! It's young Mr. Voss," the policeman murmured.

"Be it so. So be it. But remember barratry's the offence, which must be brought 'ome to Master Llewellyn!" Captain Dudeney sat down, and we went out to face a tall young man in grey trousers, frock-coat with gardenia in buttonhole, and a new top-hat, furiously biting his nails.

"I beg your pardon, but I'm Mr. Voss, of Norden and Voss — the cement-works. They've telephoned me that the works have stopped. I can't make out why. I sent for a cab, but it would take me nearly an hour—and I'm in a particular hurry — so, seein' your motor—I thought perhaps——"

"Certainly," I said. "Won't you get in and tell us where you want to go?"

"Those big works on the beach have stopped since nine o'clock. It's only five miles away—but it's very inconvenient for me." He pointed across the shimmering levels of the marsh as Leggatt wound her up.

"It's no good," said Pyecroft, climbing in beside me on the narrow back seat. "We two go out 'and in 'and, like the Babes in the Wood, both funnels smoking gently, for a coastwise cruise of inspection, an' sooner or later we find ourselves manœuvrin' with strange an' 'ostile fleets, till our bearin's are red 'ot an' our superstructures shot away. There's a ju-ju on us somewhere. Well, it won't be zebras this time!"

We jumped out on a dead-level, dead-straight road, flanked by a canal on one side and a deep marsh ditch on the other, whose perspective ended in the cement-works and the shingle ridge behind.

"Oh, be quick! I want to get back," said Mr. Voss, and that was an unfortunate remark to make to Leggatt, who has records.

Conversation was blown out of our mouths; Mr. Voss had just time to save his hat. Pyecroft stood up (he was used to destroyers) by the lamp-pole and raked the landscape with my binoculars. The marsh cattle fled from us with stiff tails. The canal streaked past like blue tape, the inshore landmarks—coast-house and church-spire—opened, closed, and stepped aside on the low hills, and the cement works enlarged themselves as under a nearing lens. Leggatt slowed at last, for the latter end of the road was badly loosed by traffic.

"The steam-mixer has stopped!" panted Mr. Voss. "We ought to hear it from here." There was certainly no sound of working machinery.

"And where are all the men?" he cried.

A few hundred yards further on, the canal broadened into a little basin immediately on the front of the machinery-shed. The road, worse at each revolution, ran on between two tin sheds, and ended, so far as we could see, in the shingle of the beach.

"Slow! Dead slow!" said Pyecroft to Leggatt, "we don't yet know the accommodation of the port nor the disposition of the natives."

The machine-shed doors were wide open. We could see a vista of boiler-furnaces, each with a pile of fuming ashes in front of it, and the outlines of arrested wheels and belting. A man on a barge in the middle of the basin waved a friendly hand.

I felt Pyecroft start and recover himself.

"Come on," said the man, taking the pipe out of his teeth. "Don't you be shy."

"What's the matter?" said Mr. Voss, standing up. "Where are my men?"

"Playing. I've ordered a general strike in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America."

He relit his pipe composedly with a fusee.

"Who the deuce are you?" Mr. Voss was angry.

"Johannes Stephanus Paulus Kruger," was the answer. Pyecroft chuckled.

"Man's mad." Mr. Voss bit his lip.

A breath of hot wind off the corrugated iron rippled the face of the basin and lifted out two very dingy but perfectly distinct red flags, one at each end of the barge.

"Go on! It's a powder-barge," said Mr. Voss, sitting down heavily.

Leggatt asserts that he acted automatically. All I know is that he must have whirled the car forward between the two sheds and up the shingle ridge behind; for when I had cleared my dry throat, we had topped the bank, hung for a fraction on the crest, and amid a roar of pebbles (the seaward side was steep) slid down on to hard sand in the face of the

untroubled Channel and a mob of acutely interested men. They looked like a bathing-party. Most of them were barefoot and wore dripping shirts tied round their necks. All were very, very red over as much of them as I could see.

"What's the matter?" cried Mr. Voss, while they surged round the car.

This was a general invitation, accepted as such, and Mr. Voss waved his white hands.

"Why were you so unusual bloomin' precipitate?" said Pyecroft to Leggatt under cover of the riot. "You very near threw us out."

"I'm not fond o' powder. Besides, it's a new car," Leggatt replied.

"Didn't you see 'oo the joker was, then?" Pyecroft asked.

"Friend o' yours?" Leggatt asked. The clamour around us grew.

"No—but a friend of Captain Dudeney's, if I'm not mistook. 'E 'ad all the marks of it. But, to please you, we'll take soundings. Mr. Voss seems to be sufferin' from 'is mutinous crew, so to put it."

At that moment Mr. Voss turned an anxious glance on the tight-buttoned blue coat and the hard, squarish hat.

"Stop!" said Pyecroft. The voice was new to me and to the others. It checked the tumult as the bottom checks the roaring anchor-chain.

"You with the stiff neck, two paces to the front and begin!"

"It's an Inspector," someone whispered. "Mr. Voss 'as brought the Police." And the mob came to hand like cooing doves.

"Look at my blisters!" said Pyecroft's chosen. He stood up in coaly trousers, the towel that should have supported them waving wet round his peeled shoulders. "You'd 'ave a neck, too, if you'd been lying out on the shingle since nine like a bloomin' dotterel. An' I'm a fair man by nature."

"Stow your nature!" said Pyecroft. "Make your report, or I'll disrate you!"

The man rubbed his neck uneasily. "We found 'im 'ere when we come. We 'eard what 'e 'ad: we saw 'ow 'e was: an' we bloomin' well 'ooked it," he said.

Now, I consider that almost perfect art; but the crowd growled at the baldness thereof, and the blistered man went on.

"So'd you, if a beggar called 'imself Mabon an' lit *all* 'is pipes with fusees settin' on top o' sixteen ton of Admiralty dynamite. Ain't that what he done ever since nine? It's all very well for you, but why didn't you come sooner an' 'elp us?"

"Stop!" said Pyecroft. "We don't want any of your antitheseses. Where's the chief petty—where's a fireman?"

A black-bearded giant stood forth. He, too, was stripped to the waist, and it had done him little good.

"Now, what about the dynamite?" Pyecroft's throne was the back seat of my car. Mr. Voss, the gardenia already wilted in the heat, made no attempt to interfere: we could see that his soul leaned heavily on the stranger. The giant lifted shy eyes.

"We found him here when we came to work. He said he had sixteen ton of dynamite *with* fuses; and when he wasn't drinkin', he was lightin' his pipe with fusees and throwin' 'em about."

"Continuous?" said Pyecroft.

"*All* the time." This with the indescribable rising inflection of the county.

Leggatt and I exchanged glances with Pyecroft.

"That sort o' stuff ain't issued in duplicate," he said to me.

"Any more than petrol. You have to have a receipt," Leggatt assented. "An' I do think 'is hair was red, but I didn't look long."

"Which only bears out my original argument when you slung us over the ridge, Mr. Leggatt. You've been too precipitous," said Pyecroft.

"What's the good o' talkin'?" said the blistered man. "We saw 'ow 'e was: we 'eard what 'e 'ad: an' we 'ooked it. I've told you once."

"Go on," said Pyecroft to the giant. "Sixteen ton *with* fuses. Most upsettin', you might say."

"When he said he was going to blow a corner off England, I ordered the men out of the works while we drew fires. Jernigan drew the fires, Mr. Voss."

"Yes, I did," the blistered man cried. "We 'ad ninety pounds steam, an' *I* know Number Four boiler; but Duncan 'ere 'e got me the time to draw 'em." The crowd clapped.

"'E 'asn't told you 'arf. 'E put 'is 'ands behind 'is back an' 'e sung 'ymns to that beggar in the barge all through breakfast-time. It's as true as I'm standin' 'ere. 'E sung 'A Few More Years Shall Roll' right *on* the edge of the basin, with the beggar throwin' live fusees about regardless all the time. Else I couldn't 'ave drawn the fires, Mr. Voss."

"'Ighly commendable, Mr. Duncan," said Pyecroft, as though it were his right to praise or blame, and the crowd clapped again.

"How did you get to the telephone to send me the message?" said Mr. Voss.

"On 'is 'ands an' knees over the shingle." There was no suppressing the blistered man. "While Mr. Mabon was 'oldin' an I-Stifford by 'imself."

"I—what?" said Pyecroft.

"'Stifford. They 'ave 'em in Bethesda. I've worked there. A Welsh concert like."

"Oh, 'e's Welsh, then?"

Pyecroft fixed Leggatt with an accusing left eyeball.

"You've only to listen to 'im. 'E's seldom quiet. 'Ark now." The blistered man held up his hand.

The tide crept lazily in little flashes over the sand. A becalmed fishing-boat's crew stood up to look at our assembly, and certain gulls wheeled and made mock of us. East and west the ridge shook in the heat; the martello-towers flatting into buns or shooting into spires as the oily streaks of air shifted. We stood about the car as shipwrecked mariners in the illustration gather round the long-boat, and seldom were any sailors more peeled and puffed and salt-scurfed.

"Conversation was blown out of our mouths; Mr. Voss had just time to save his hat."

A thin voice floated over the ridge in high falsetto quavers. It was certainly not English.

"That's 'ow they sing at Bethesda on a Sunday," said the blistered man. "I wish 'e was there now. This'll all come off in frills-like, to-morrow," he pulled at his whitening nose.

"And the more you go into the water, the more it seems to sting you coming out," said another drearily. "You'd better 'ave a wet 'andkerchief round your 'ead, Mr. Voss.

> "Hark the tramp of Saxon foemen,
> Saxon spearmen, Saxon bowmen—
> Be they knight or be they yeomen——"

the unseen voice went on, in clipped English.

"If I had a cousin like that, I'd have drowned 'im long ago," said Pyecroft half to himself.

"Drownin's too good for 'im. We've been 'ere since nine cookin' like ostrich eggs. Baines, run an' wet a 'andkerchief for Mr. Voss." It was the blistered man again. Duncan stood moodily apart chewing his beard.

"Thank you. Oh, thank you!" said Mr. Voss. "The machinery cost thirty thousand, and it's a quarter of a million contract." He turned to Pyecroft as he knotted the dripping handkerchief round his brows under the radiant hat.

"Tactically, Mr. Mabon Kruger's position is irreproachable," Pyecroft replied. "Or, to

put it coarsely, there's no getting at the beggar with a brick, for instance?"

"*I* ain't goin' to 'eave bricks at a dynamite barge, for one," said the blistered man, and this seemed the general opinion.

"Nonsense!" I began. "Why, there's no earthly chance——"

"Not if you want it to go off," said Pyecroft hurriedly. "You can fair chew dynamite *then*; but if it's any object with you to delay ignition, a friendly nod will fetch her smilin'. *I* ought to know somethin' about it."

"Presently," said Duncan, the foreman, with great simplicity, "he'll have to sleep, an' I'll go out to him. I'll wait till then."

"No, you don't!" cried many voices. "Not till you've 'ad a drink an' a feed an' a sleep. . . . Don't talk fulish, Duncan. Go an' wet yer 'ead."

"He made me sing hymns," Duncan went on in the same flat voice.

"That won't 'elp you when you're bein' 'ung at Lewes. . . . Don't be fulish, Duncan," the voices replied, and a man behind me muttered: "I've seen 'im take an' throw a fireman from the furnace door to the canal—eight yards. We measured it. No, no, Duncan."

I thanked Fortune that my little plan of dramatically revealing all to the crowd had been dismissed on a nod from Pyecroft, the reader of souls, who had seen it in my silly eye.

"No," he said aloud, answering me and none other. "I ain't slept with a few thousand men in hammocks for twenty years without knowin' their nature. Mr. Mabon Kruger is in the fairway and has to be shifted; but whatever 'e's done, let us remember that 'e's given us a day off."

"Off be sugared!" said the blistered man. "*On*—on a bloomin' gridiron! If you'd come to the beach when we did, you wouldn't be so nasty just to the beggar. You talk a lot, but what we want to know is what you're going to do?"

"'Ear! 'ear!" said the crowd, "that's what we want to know. Go and shift 'im yourself."

Pyecroft bit back a weighty reproof.

"Wind her up, Mr. Leggatt," he said, "and ram 'er at the first lowest place in the ridge. You men fall in an' push behind if she checks."

"What's that for? You ain't never——"

"We're goin' to shift 'im. All you've got to do is to 'elp the car over the ridge an' then take cover. You talk too much." He swung out of the car, and Leggatt mounted. The churn of the machinery drowned Mr. Voss's protests, but as the car drew away along the sands westerly, followed by the men, he said to Pyecroft: "But—but suppose you annoy him? He may blow up the works. Ha—hadn't we better wait?"

"With him chuckin' fusees about every minute? Certainly not. Come along!" He started at a trot towards the shingle ridge which Leggatt was already charging.

"Would you mind," Mr. Voss panted, "telling me who you are?" Pyecroft looked at him reproachfully and he continued: "I can see that you're in a responsible position, but . . . I'd like to know."

"You're right. I hold a position of some responsibility under the Admiralty. That's Admiralty dynamite, ain't it?"

"Yes, but I don't understand how it came here."

"Nor I. But someone will be hung for it. You can make your mind quite easy about that. That explains everything, don't it? The plain facts of the case is that someone has blundered, an' 'ence there's not a minute to be lost. *Don't* you see?" He edged towards the car on the top of the ridge, Mr. Voss clinging to his manly hand.

"But, suppose——" said Mr. Voss. "The risks are frightful."

"They are. *You* know 'ow it is with the horrors. If he catches sight o' one o' your men, 'e's as like as not to touch off all the fireworks, under the impression that 'e's bein' bombarded. Keep 'em down on the beach well under cover while we try to coax 'im. *You* know 'ow it is with the horrors!"

"No, I don't," said Mr. Voss with a sudden fury. "Confound it all, I'm going to be married to-day!"

"I'd postpone it if I was you," Pyecroft returned. "But that explains much, as you might say."

"We want to say——" the blistered man clutched Pyecroft's leg as he mounted. I took the back seat, none regarding.

"I'll 'ear all the evidence *pro* and *con* to-morrow. Go back to the beach! Don't you move for an hour! We may 'ave to coax 'im!" he shouted. "Get back and wait! Let 'er go, Leggatt!"

We plunged down the shingle to the pebble-speckled turf at the back of the sheds. Leggatt doubled with mirth, steering most vilely. The crowd retired behind the ridge.

"Whew!" said Pyecroft, unbuttoning his jacket. "Another minute and that bride-

"'Stop!' said Pyecroft. 'We don't want any of your antitheseses. Where's the chief petty—where's a fireman?'"

groom in the four-point-seven hat would have made me almost a liar."

"Stop!" I said, as Leggatt leaned forward helpless on the tiller; but Pyecroft continued: "'Ere's three solitary unknown strangers committin' a piece of blindin' heroism besides which Casabianca is obsolete; an' all the cement-mixer can think o' saying is: ''Oo are you?' Or words to that effect. He must 'ave wanted me to give 'im my card."

"I wonder what he thinks," I said, as we ran between the sheds to the basin.

"The machinery cost thirty thousand pounds, 'e says. 'E's sweatin' blood to that amount every minute. He ain't thinkin' of his bride."

An empty whisky-bottle broke like a shell before our wheels. We had come between the sheds within effective range of the man on the barge.

"Good hand at description, Captain Dudeney is," said Pyecroft critically, never moving a muscle. "Fig-nose — saucer-ear, freckle-jaw — all present an' correct. What a cousin! Perishin' 'Eavens Above! What a cousin! Good afternoon, Mr. Llewellyn! So here's where you've 'id after stealing Captain Dudeney's whisky, is it?"

"What? What?" the man capered the full length of the barge, a bottle in either hand. "The old ram! Me hide? Me? No, indeed—what for? What have I done to be ashamed of?" He rubbed his broken nose furiously.

"If that's what the Captain paid five pounds for, he got the value of his money, so to speak," said Pyecroft, and raising his voice: "All right. Good-bye. I'll tell your cousin I've seen you, but you're afraid to come back."

The answer I take it was in Welsh.

"He told me to tell you that next time he'll pay fifteen pounds for you, besides knocking your red head flush with your shoulders. Good-bye, Llewellyn."

I had barely time to avoid a hissing coil of rope hurled at my feet.

"He said thatt!" the man screamed. "Catch! Pull! Haul! The old ram! No, indeed. You shall not go away. I will have him preached of in chapel. I will bring the bottles. I will show him how!

My hair red! Fetch me away! My cousin!"

"Unmoor, then, and we'll tow you!" Pyecroft hauled on the rope. "It's easier than I thought," he said to me. "I remember a Welsh fireman in the *Sycophant* 'oo got drunk on Boaz Island, an' the only way we could coax 'im off the reef, where numerous sharks were anticipatin' 'im, was by urgin' 'im to fight the captain."

The barge bumped at our feet, and Pyecroft leaped aboard.

I seemed to see some sort of demonstrative greeting between the two—a hug or a pat on the back, perhaps. And then Llewellyn sat in the stern, lacking only the label for despatch as a neatly corded mummy.

"Quacks like a duck. All that's pure Welsh," said Pyecroft. "But I don't think it 'ud do you an' me any good in a manner o' speakin' even if translated."

"'Ere! Look out!" said Leggatt. "You'll pull the rear-axle out o' her."

"You don't know anythin' about movin' bodies. I don't know much—yet. We can but essay." Pyecroft was on his knees tying expert knots round the rear-axle. I had never seen motor-cars applied to canal traffic before, and so stood deaf to Leggatt's highly technical appeals.

"Go ahead slow and take care the tow don't foul the port tyre. A towin'-piece an' bollards is what we really need. One never knows what one'll pick up on inspection tours like ours."

"Why, she goes!" said Leggatt over his shoulder, as the barge drew after the car.

"Like a roseleaf on a stream," said Pyecroft at the tiller. "Jump in! Kindly increase speed to fifty-seven revolutions, an' the barge an' its lethal cargo will show you what she can do. Look 'ere, Mr. Llewellyn, you ain't with your wife now, an' your non-commercial language don't appeal. If you've anything on your mind, sing it in a low voice. We're runnin' trials. Sixty-seven revolutions *if* you please, Mr. Leggatt."

I have the honour to report here that an 18-h.p. Decapod petrol motor can haul a barge of x tons capacity down a straight canal at the rate of knots; but that the wash and consequent erosion of the banks is somewhat marked. The Welshman lay still. Pyecroft was at the tiller, the delighted Leggatt was stealing extra knots out of her. Our wash roared behind us—a foot high from bank to bank. I sat in the bows crying "Port!" or "Starboard!" as guileless fancy led, and rejoiced in this my one life.

The cement works grew small behind us—small and very still.

"They have not yet resoomed," said Pyecroft. "I take it they hardly anticipated such prompt action on the part o' the relievin' column. A little more, Mr. Leggatt, *if* you please."

"It's all very, very beautiful," I cooed, for the heat of the day was past and Llewellyn had fallen asleep; "but aren't we making rather a wash? There's a lump as big as Beachy Head just fallen in behind us."

"We 'ave, so to speak, dragged the bowels out of three miles of 'er," Pyecroft admitted. "Let's hope it's Mr. Voss's canal. That bakin' bridegroom owes us a lot. A little more, Mr. Hinchcliff—or Leggatt, I should say. We're creepin' up to twelve."

"People—comin' from Wapshare—four of em!" cried Leggatt who from the high car-seat could see along the road.

Pyecroft passed me the tiller as he unslung the binoculars to look. None but Pyecrofts should steer barges at P. and O. speeds. In that brief second, just as he said "Captain Dudeney!" the barge's nose ran with ferocity feet deep into the mud; and as I hopefully waggled the tiller, her stern flourished across the water and stuck even deeper on the opposite bank. Our wash bottled up by this sudden barricade leaped aboard in a low, muddy wave that broke all over our Mr. Llewellyn.

"Who's that dish-washer at the wheel?" he gurgled.

"You may well ask," said Pyecroft, with professional sympathy.

"Relieve him at once. I'll show him how." He sat up in his bonds rolling blinded eyes.

Pyecroft lifted him, laid his two hands, freed as far as the elbows, on the tiller, to which he clung fervently, and bellowed in his ear: "Down! Hard down for your life. You'll be ashore in a minute. Don't abandon the ship!"

We withdrew over the bows to dry land. I felt I need not apologise to Leggatt, for, after all, it was my own car that I had brought up with so round a turn. The barge seemed well at rest.

"They'll 'ave to dig 'er out—unless they care to blow 'er up," said Pyecroft, climbing into the seat. "But all the same, that Man of 'Arlech 'as the feelin's of a sailor. Meet 'er! Meet 'er as she scends! You'll roll the sticks out of her if you don't!" he shouted in farewell.

We left Mr. Llewellyn clawing off a

"I have the honour to report here that an 18-h.p. Decapod petrol motor can haul a barge of x tons capacity down a straight canal."

verdant lee shore, and this the more readily because Captain Dudeney and three friends were running towards us. But they passed us, with eyes only for the barge, as though we had been ghosts. Captain Dudeney roared like all the bulls of the marshes. I will never allow Leggatt to drive for any distance with his chin over his shoulder, so we stopped anew.

The Welshman still steered, but when his cousin's challenge came down the wind, he forsook all and, with fettered feet, crawled like a parrot on a perch to meet him. Like a parrot, too, he screamed and pointed at us.

We saw the five faces all pink in the westering sun; the Welshman was urging them to the chase.

"Ungrateful blighter! After we've saved 'im from being killed at the cement works," said Pyecroft. "Home's the port for me. There's too much intricate explanation necessary on this coast. Let's navigate." . . .

Ten minutes later we were three miles from Wapshare and two hundred feet above it, commanding the map-like stretch of marsh ruled with roads, ditches, and canals that, etc.

One canal seemed to be blocked by a barge drawn across it, and here five dots clustered, separated, rejoined, and gyrated for a full twenty minutes ere they seemed satisfied to go home. Anon (we were all fighting for the binoculars) a stream of dots poured from the cement works and moved—oh, so slowly! —along the white road till they reached the barge. Here they scattered and did not rejoin for a great space upon the other side; resembling in this respect a column of ants whose march has been broken by a drop of spilt kerosene.

"Amen! Amen!" said Emanuel Pyecroft, bareheaded in the gloom of an oak hangar. "This day hasn't been one of the worst of 'em, either, in a manner o' speakin'. I'll come to-morrow *incognito* an' 'elp pick up the pieces. Because there will be lots of 'em, as one might anticipate."

* * * * *

The morrow sent me visitors—young, fair, and infernally curious. They had heard much of the beauties of Wapshare, which, where the suburban builder has left it alone, precisely resembles, etc. And though I praised half the rest of England, Wapshare they would see. The car's new, mirror-like body—scarlet and claret with gold lines —looked as spruce as Leggatt in his French smock, and I flatter myself that my own costume, also Parisian, which included nickel-plated goggles with flesh-coloured flaps on the cheek-bones and a severely classic leather hat, was completely of the road.

My guests were delighted with their trip.

"We had such a perfect day," they explained at tea. "There was a delightful wedding coming out of that old church up that cobbled street--don't you remember? And just below it by that place where the ships anchored there was quite a riot. We saw it all from that upper road by that old tower—hundreds and hundreds of men throwing coal at a little ship that was trying to go to sea. Oh, yes, and a most fascinating coastguard or something naval—that clean man with the wonderful eyes who touched his hat so respectfully (all sailors are dears) —he told us all about it."

"What did he say?" someone asked.

"He said it wasn't anything to what it had been. He said we ought to have been there at noon when he came—before the poor little ship got away from the wharf. He said they nearly called out the Militia. I should like to have seen that. Oh, and *do* you remember that big, black-bearded man at the very edge of the wharf who kept on throwing coal at the ship and shouting all the time we watched?"

"What had the little ship done?"

"The coastguard said that he was a stranger in these parts and didn't quite know. Oh, yes, and then the *chauffeur* swallowed a fly and choked. But it was a simply perfect day."

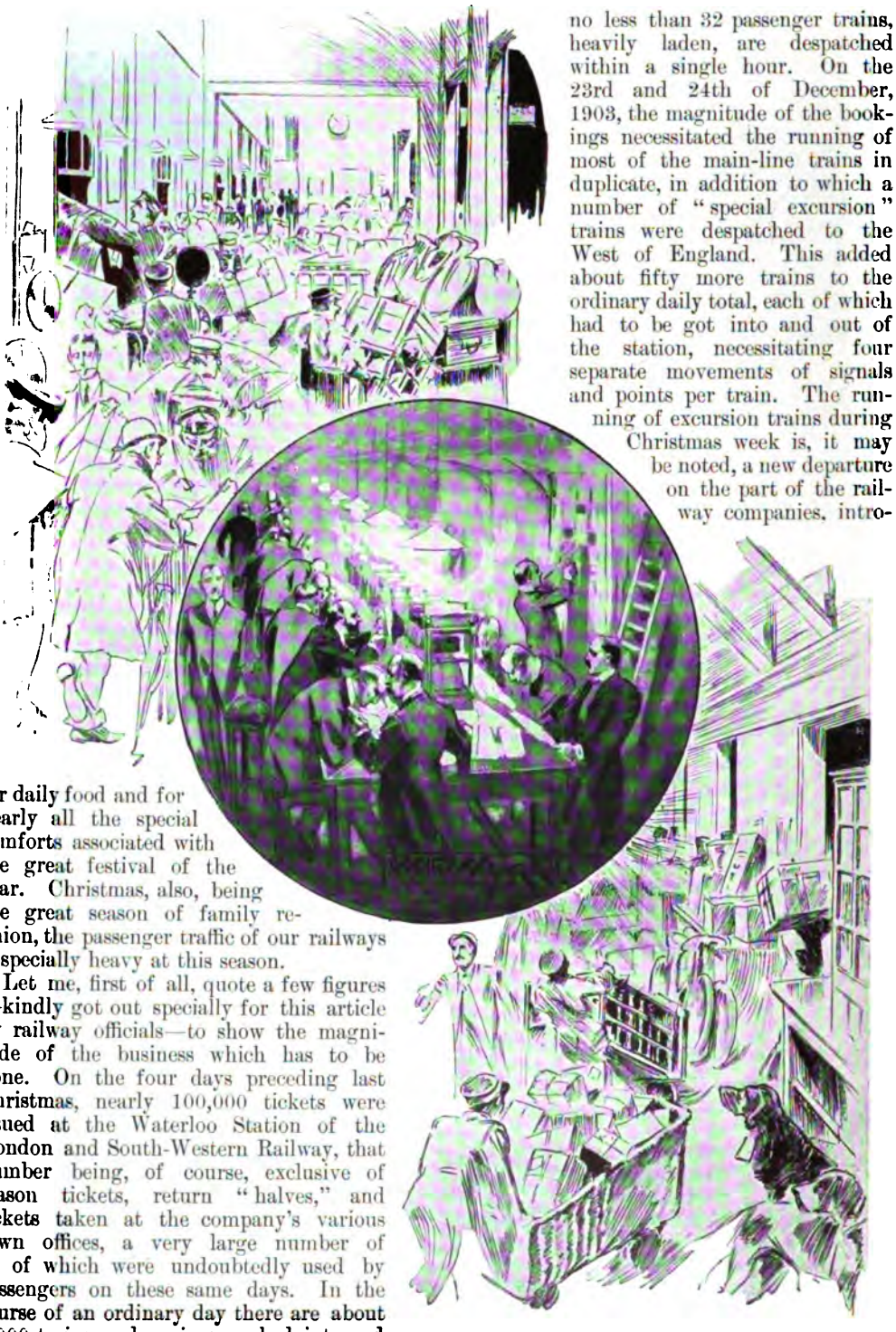
OUR RAILWAYS AT CHRISTMAS.

By CHARLES H. GRINLING.

THE RAILWAY PORTER AT CHRISTMAS.

ONE often hears the remark that "the old-fashioned Christmas is a thing of the past." Certainly times have changed since Charles Dickens wrote his "good-humoured Christmas chapter" of Pickwick, and the novelist himself observes in the heading to that chapter that the "good customs" therein recorded, "are not quite so religiously kept up in these degenerate days." The writings of Dickens did much to revive and strengthen those old customs; but at the very time when he was producing the "Pickwick Papers," a new force was taking shape in the world by which every social habit of the people was destined to be profoundly influenced. "Pickwick" was published in 1837; the London and Birmingham Railway—our first trunk line—was opened in 1838. At the very moment when Dickens was penning his Christmas chapter, the death-knell was sounding of "the Muggleton coach," upon which Mr. Pickwick and his friends made their never-to-be-forgotten journey to spend Christmas with old Wardle and the fat boy at Dingley Dell, "well wrapt up in great-coats, shawls, and comforters," and accompanied by a "huge cod-fish—snugly packed up in a long, brown basket with a layer of straw over the top," half-a-dozen barrels of "real native oysters," and Mr. Weller. "The guard and Mr. Weller disappear for five minutes, most probably to get the hot brandy and water, for they smell very strongly of it when they return; the coachman mounts to the box, Mr. Weller jumps up behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats round their legs and their shawls over their noses, the helpers pull the horse-cloths off, the coachman shouts a cheery 'All right!' and away they go."

Times have indeed changed in those sixty-seven years, but Christmas is still Christmas, though "the Muggleton Telegraph" no longer "rattles through the ill-paved streets." The scene at a great railway-station any hour of the days immediately preceding the great festival is, I venture to think, not one whit less suggestive of "the spirit of Christmas present" than were the incidents of the old coaching days. The meetings of friends long severed—boys and girls coming home from school, young men and maidens returning from scattered fields of work—the Christmas hampers gorging the platforms and piled high on the vans; the snow which has fallen in Scotland the same morning still unmelted on the roofs of the carriages newly arrived in the London terminus; the departure of the outward-bound night train from the opposite platform, the passengers composing themselves to sleep in their snug berths with the knowledge that, when Christmas morning breaks, they will waken to the sight of beloved faces at some far northern station, whilst the driver and fireman prepare for a long and anxious night's ride through frost or snow or driving rain, every minute bearing them a mile farther from their own fireside and quiet home. These are but the bare outlines of a picture which the pen of a Dickens might make to live before us. In the hands of the present writer the theme must fall to a lower level, my object being to supplement the series of articles on "The Ways of Our Railways," which have already appeared in this magazine, by some account of the special work which falls upon our railway companies at Christmas-time in consequence of the absolute dependence of the modern world upon means of transport alike



CHRISTMAS SCENES IN RAILWAY PARCELS OFFICES.

It is upon the parcels department that the full brunt of the pressure falls.

for daily food and for nearly all the special comforts associated with the great festival of the year. Christmas, also, being the great season of family re-union, the passenger traffic of our railways is specially heavy at this season.

Let me, first of all, quote a few figures—kindly got out specially for this article by railway officials—to show the magnitude of the business which has to be done. On the four days preceding last Christmas, nearly 100,000 tickets were issued at the Waterloo Station of the London and South-Western Railway, that number being, of course, exclusive of season tickets, return "halves," and tickets taken at the company's various town offices, a very large number of all of which were undoubtedly used by passengers on these same days. In the course of an ordinary day there are about 1,000 trains and engines worked into and out of Waterloo, the busiest time being between 5.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m., when no less than 32 passenger trains, heavily laden, are despatched within a single hour. On the 23rd and 24th of December, 1903, the magnitude of the bookings necessitated the running of most of the main-line trains in duplicate, in addition to which a number of "special excursion" trains were despatched to the West of England. This added about fifty more trains to the ordinary daily total, each of which had to be got into and out of the station, necessitating four separate movements of signals and points per train. The running of excursion trains during Christmas week is, it may be noted, a new departure on the part of the railway companies, intro-

duced to foster the growing habit of travel at this season of the year. Not only do vast numbers of people "go home" for Christmas, but an increasing number of families spend Christmas away from home, the opportunity of several consecutive days' cessation of business tempting hard-workers to seek recreation in change of scene and air. Of course, to many of those engaged in business, and particularly to shop assistants, the weeks immediately preceding Christmas are specially trying, involving long hours of unremitting toil; and this class has not been

CHRISTMAS ON THE DEPARTURE PLATFORM.

At Christmas every one of the large railway companies has to run special trains for the conveyance of parcels only.

overlooked in the railway companies' arrangements. The Great Eastern Company, for example, runs special midnight trains on Christmas Eve to the principal stations on its system. Leaving Liverpool Street after twelve has struck, these trains speed through the Eastern Counties during the small hours of Christmas morning, carrying to their country homes, or to the seaside, hundreds of fagged-out workers whose weeks of weary toil are soon forgotten "in that happy state of companionship and mutual goodwill" of which Dickens writes so touchingly in the chapter already quoted. A greater boon than any number of "Muggleton coaches" could be are these midnight trains of our modern Christmas; and those to whom they mean the difference between a cheerless day in London lodgings and the merriment of the family fireside should not fail to give a sympathetic thought to the engine-drivers, firemen, guards, and signalmen upon whose labours the safety of their homeward journey depends. Were the part our railways play at Christmas-time properly understood—and I hope it may be better realised when this article has been read to its conclusion—there would be a collection for the Railway Benevolent Institution at every Christmas dinner-table.

Next to reunion with friends from whom we have been long parted, there is no sight

DETRAINING AND DELIVERY.

There is no sight more welcome than the arrival of the Christmas hamper.

more welcome at this festive season than the arrival of the Christmas hamper. For this joy, also, we are indebted to the agency of the railways, to the workers upon which Christmas presents, like Christmas journeys, mean a heavy strain of extra labour. Whether the parcels be sent through the post or handed in at the nearest station, the railway servants have to do the bulk of the work connected with their transport. A small proportion of the Post parcels are road-borne, but the majority are handed over by the Post Office to the railway companies for conveyance, the postal authorities confining their energies to the work of collection and delivery at either end. Even the loading into and out of the mail-carts at the stations has to be done by the companies' porters. The numbers of parcel-post hampers dealt with by the London and North-Western at its London terminus during the seven days prior to last Christmas Day was 35,000. To facilitate the work a special large shed, eighty yards long and forty feet wide, was erected adjoining the railway at Maiden Lane, near Euston, and used exclusively for loading the parcels mails into trains.

The parcels department on most British railways is a branch of the department of the superintendent of the line. It has a quite separate organisation from the goods department, and is, indeed, a section of the passenger working. Originally, all parcels were carried in the brake-vans of trains conveying passengers, a higher scale of rates being charged than for goods train traffic, in consideration of the greater speed and regularity of the service rendered. A great deal of the parcels traffic is still carried on in this way, but in a good many cases the business developed between certain points has become so large as to necessitate the daily running of special trains devoted to the carriage of "parcels" only. All the northern lines, for instance, run special milk trains to London and other great towns, by which millions of churns are carried annually, the total for the Great Western alone being 1,113,769 cans in 1903. Special fish and fruit trains are also run by the parcels departments; but in cases where speed is not so urgent a consideration, perishable traffic is consigned by goods trains at a lower scale of charges. More than one-eighth of the total revenue attributable to the running of passenger trains on our railways is derived from the carriage of parcels, mails, excess luggage, carriages, horses, dogs, etc.; and two companies—the London and North-Western and Great Western—each earn over a million pounds a year annually from the sources just named.

This amount of preliminary explanation is necessary to enable the reader to understand the significance of the phrase "parcels department" in connection with the working of our railways. At Christmas-time the goods department has much work of an exceptional character to do—as we shall see later on in this article—but the extra work involved upon that section of the staff is more than balanced by the comparative lightness of the general merchandise and mineral traffic consequent upon the approach of a holiday period. It is upon the parcels department that the full brunt of the pressure falls; for the things which everyone sends to everyone else at Christmas-time are just those things with which this department has to deal; whilst there is no slackening, but rather an increase, in those kinds of traffic which form the staple of "parcels" all the year round. The demand for milk and fish and fruit is greater than ever during the festive season. To give one instance, the South-Western Railway Company has to run four extra trains for the conveyance of milk-churns in and out of London on each of the three or four days immediately preceding

THE EXTRA PARCELS STAFF.
Porters lent by the "Goods."

Christmas. In addition to providing extra facilities for milk, every one of the large railway companies has to run special trains for the conveyance of miscellaneous parcels —a thing which is not done except by two or three companies at other times of the year. In the case of the London and North-Western, six special trains carrying nothing but parcels and parcel-post hampers, are run daily from and to Euston during the days of Christmas pressure, in addition to other "specials" for the conveyance of fish and perishable traffic generally, and besides the many additional parcels vans which are attached to the passenger trains. The number of parcels dealt with at Euston station during the period immediately preceding Christmas, 1903, was more than double that of any normal period of the year, besides which there was an exceptionally heavy traffic in newspapers.

I have before me as I write full particulars of the "special express parcels trains" run by the Midland Railway Company during Christmas week a year ago. The pressure began on December 21st, when three additional trains devoted exclusively to parcels were run from London and Derby to Manchester and Bradford, one from Bristol to Derby, and one from Leicester to Birmingham and back. This was on the Monday, Christmas Day being on the Friday; and the same trains, with an extra one between Leicester and Birmingham, were repeated on the following days. The number of parcels handled at St. Pancras station alone during the week preceding Christmas was close upon 100,000. I learn from the Great Eastern Company that during the same week of last year, nearly 160,000 parcels passed through the offices at Liverpool Street, whilst the London and South-Western authorities inform me that between 125,000 and 126,000 were conveyed in the three special trains which were run in each direction over that system, to and from Waterloo, for several days before the great winter festival. The Great Northern dealt with over 22,000 at King's Cross on a single day; whilst the Lancashire and Yorkshire had about 80,000 in excess of the normal number on its system. The number of parcels dealt with at Paddington last Christmas was about 112,000, not including "transfers"—*i.e.*, parcels going to or coming from other lines. All these figures are, of course, exclusive of the Post parcels carried by the railway companies.

The special working notice-book issued by the Great Western Railway Company to its train staff for Christmas, 1903, a copy of which also lies before me, is eloquent of the amount of extra traffic which has to be provided for. We first read of a "Marlborough College Special" to Marlborough and back, Friday, December 18th, and of a similar train from Cheltenham and London on the same day with "Cheltenham Lady Collegians." On the next day the duplication of the more important main-line trains commenced, and the following half-dozen pages deal with such duplications from the Saturday till the Tuesday. On that day, the 22nd, we find a "Special Parcel Post Train, London to Penzance," and another "Penzance to London," and three more school "specials" to London for the conveyance of the boys of Clifton College, Malvern College, and Cheltenham College respectively. These trains start early in the morning, and one can picture the happy scene as they unload their merry freight at Paddington in quick succession. Pages more of "duplicate" passenger trains follow, interspersed with "specials" for the Post Office, some for letters and others for parcels. "It is of the utmost importance," the instructions state, "that all mail trains should work as punctually as possible, and every effort must be made to accomplish this." Then comes a list of "empty stock trains" to Paddington on December 21st, 22nd and 23rd, showing that the exodus from London has exceeded the flow of traffic thither, and that it is necessary to run empty trains to redress the balance.

On pages 41 to 46 of this Great Western "Christmas Number," we read of the "Special Parcels Trains." They are "to carry 'C' head-lights," which means the same head-lights as passenger trains, so as to give them precedence over "goods" at the hands of signalmen. Of the South Wales parcels trains, which run from New Milford to London, we read: "Poultry vans to be supplied for these trains as far as possible." This is to accommodate the Irish poultry traffic, as many as 100 tons being sometimes brought over in one of the Great Western's boats from Waterford to New Milford. "The object of the special parcels trains," we read in another place, "is to relieve the passenger trains, and on the down journey to take those parcels which are too late for the last ordinary trains; it is, therefore, particularly required that the passenger trains on the before-named days may not be delayed for parcels or in any way overloaded

RAILWAY PARCELS TEAMS.

The road cartage of Christmas parcels is an onerous task for the railway companies.

with them. . . The parcels trains should, as far as possible, be formed of covered goods vans, horse-boxes, carriage-trucks and milk-trucks should be used for parcels and poultry, so that the passenger brake-vans can be available for passenger train working." It is no easy task to find sufficient rolling-stock for the extra passenger and parcels trains run at Christmas, and sometimes very old, and almost obsolete, coaches have to be pressed into service for these few days. Altogether, there are no less than ninety pages in the Great Western's special Christmas "Notice" for 1903, all referring to additions and alterations to the train service during the eight days from December 18th to 25th of that year.

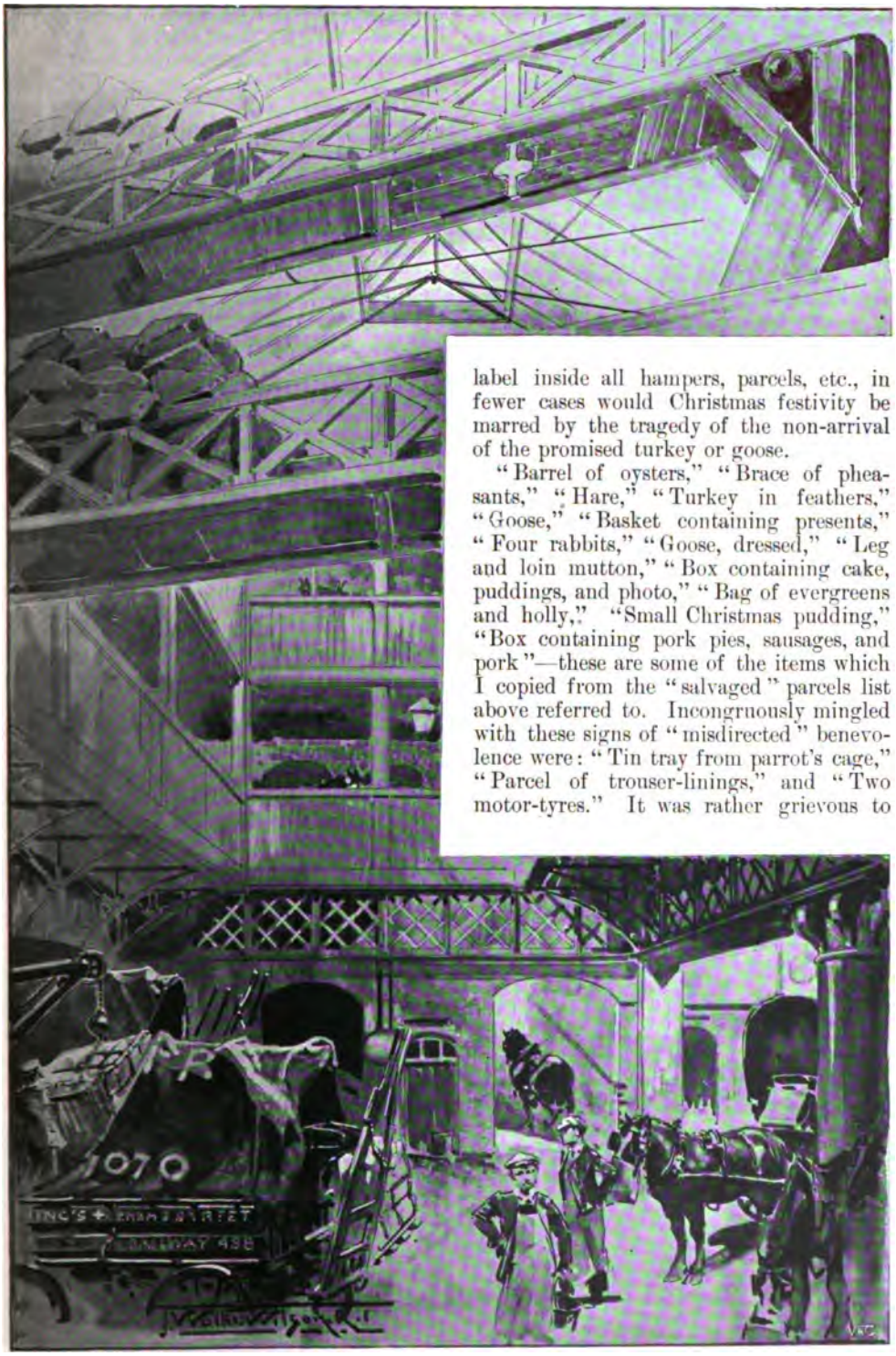
The road cartage of Christmas parcels is a scarcely less onerous task for the railway companies than their conveyance over the lines. All except the Post parcels have to be delivered to the homes of the recipients in the companies' carts, and a great number have to be brought to the stations in the same way, especially those handed in at the town receiving-offices, many of which—particularly around London—are several miles from the railway depôts. At the time of the introduction of railways it was generally feared that the iron horse would supersede its living prototype. No one anticipated that railway companies would become the largest horse-owners in the Kingdom, employing numbers far larger than the largest studs of the stage-coach proprietors of former days. But the horse and cartage departments of our railways are of sufficient interest and importance to be reserved as the subject of a future article. What we are concerned with now are the special arrangements which have to be made each Christmas for the cartage of the thousands of extra parcels which, as we have seen, have to be dealt with by the railway companies at this season of the year.

London, with its immense area, of course presents the greatest difficulties. Were all the railways under one control, undoubtedly a good deal of the longer-distance cartage might be saved by utilising more fully the various suburban lines. As things are, the exigencies of competition require that every company should be, as far as possible, ubiquitous through the Metropolitan area. Where a company has no station, it must have a receiving-office, the connecting link

being a frequent service of carts. Some of the large railways employ from 1,000 to 2,000 horses in London alone, and yet at Christmas time it is necessary for most of them to hire extra teams in order to overtake the work. Except for the special market traffic, to which I shall refer later, the cartage work of the goods department becomes comparatively light as Christmas draws near. Their time of pressure comes earlier, when the shops are stocking up for the winter trade. It is usual, therefore, for the "goods" to lend teams to the "parcels" during Christmas week, as many as fifty being the number thus borrowed in London on several of the leading lines. When outside hiring has to be resorted to, it is generally considered better policy for the contractors' teams to be employed on "goods" than on "parcels" work—at any rate, so far as the deliveries are concerned. The prompt delivery of a load of parcels is a task demanding a considerable amount of knowledge and experience. A man who knows his round, and is expert in the packing and sorting of the parcels, will get through in a few hours a job which would take a day in the hands of a novice. It is better to hire teams for straightforward goods cartage, which can be paid for on tonnage, and to employ none but trained railway carmen on the far more difficult passenger train traffic deliveries, otherwise the cartage may easily cost more per parcel than the whole of the sum charged on the traffic. As showing the care exercised, I may add that in the case of the Great Northern Railway, an elaborate time-table is drawn up specially for Christmas of all the work to be done by the forty pair-horse teams which are employed in London in collecting parcels from the town offices; whilst the work of the delivery teams is most carefully sectionalised into districts to avoid overlapping.

I have before me a pamphlet of six closely printed pages, kindly lent to me by the London and North-Western Railway Company, setting out its "Arrangements for Christmas Parcels in London, 1903." From the information therein given, it appears that about 150 collecting and delivery vans have to be found for the conveyance of parcels to and from Euston Station alone, some of these being "goods" vans borrowed for the occasion, and others being specially supplied from the company's carriage works at Wolverton, where vehicles of this class, as well as passenger carriages, are built and repaired. The provision of sets of harness, tarpaulins, ropes, lamps, and other gear for these extra vans is also a matter which has to be specially arranged for. The extra carmen required are provided by the goods department, and choice is made of the most experienced men for the delivery work, their places on the "goods" staff being temporarily filled up by others of the staff who are able to drive. Special instructions are given that full loads shall be made up, so as to avoid two carts running over the same ground at short intervals. It also appears from the pamphlet that clerks and porters are lent by the "goods" to the "parcels" for the Christmas work, and every precaution is taken that the staff provided shall be adequate for the task they have to perform, so that all delays shall be avoided. As at other times, so at Christmas, "Keep everything moving!" is the motto of the staff. If the work were once allowed to accumulate, it would be fatal to the whole organisation. Everything must be cleared up as soon as it is received; otherwise the machine would become hopelessly clogged. It is pleasant to learn that the physical needs of the men employed for such long hours at the railway parcels offices at Christmas-time are not forgotten, special arrangements being made for the provision of refreshments to the staff.

What happiness these Christmas parcels bring! And what disappointment and grief are connected with those which go astray! In the euphemistic language of the railway offices, these derelicts are known as "salvaged" parcels, which means that, all efforts to trace their destinations having failed, they have been sold for what they would fetch. As many of the Christmas parcels consist of perishable goods, discretion has to be allowed to the officials in charge of the various parcels offices to make the sales as promptly as may be necessary. It would be no good holding over a turkey or a brace of pheasants until the company's periodical salvage auction came round. At the offices of one of the leading railways I was allowed to glance through the list of last year's lost Christmas parcels. There were but fifty "salvaged" in London out of a total of over 100,000 handled, and in most cases the senders were at fault for not taking sufficient care in addressing the packages. People send away parcels by rail at Christmas who probably never do so at any other time of the year, and some of them apparently think that the companies employ a staff of thought-readers, and can dispense with plainly written instructions. If the public would but observe the simple rule of placing a duplicate address-



label inside all hampers, parcels, etc., in fewer cases would Christmas festivity be marred by the tragedy of the non-arrival of the promised turkey or goose.

"Barrel of oysters," "Brace of pheasants," "Hare," "Turkey in feathers," "Goose," "Basket containing presents," "Four rabbits," "Goose, dressed," "Leg and loin mutton," "Box containing cake, puddings, and photo," "Bag of evergreens and holly," "Small Christmas pudding," "Box containing pork pies, sausages, and pork"—these are some of the items which I copied from the "salvaged" parcels list above referred to. Incongruously mingled with these signs of "misdirected" benevolence were: "Tin tray from parrot's cage," "Parcel of trouser-linings," and "Two motor-tyres." It was rather grievous to

THE RETURN OF THE TEAMS TO THE STABLES.

The railway companies are larger horse-owners than were the stage-coach proprietors of former days.

read that the Christmas pudding was "sold for sixpence," and that the holly and evergreens were "thrown away"; but one need not expend sympathy upon the intended recipient of "four pieces of beef," which were "condemned by inspector as unfit for food." The "box containing cake, puddings, and photo" was still "on hand" when the list was drawn up, and perchance it may yet be traced to its destination in time for the Christmas festivities of 1904!

I have said that the traffic carried by the goods trains on our railways is comparatively light during Christmas week, owing to the approach of a period of general cessation of business. There is, however, one important exception — the traffic for the Christmas cattle-shows and dead-meat markets. Despite the competition of American and Colonial meat, "prime Scotch" is more than ever in demand every year for the Christmas sales, and the lines running into London and other great towns from the North have a day or two just before the great carnival when the "meat" trains from across the Border are of even greater concern to the officials than the "Flying Scotchman" itself. A year ago the pressure was specially great, because Christmas Day fell on a Friday. This necessitated all the meat getting to market at the beginning of the week; and the Scotch packers, true to their traditions, would not hear of despatching their consignments on the Sunday. Ordinarily the pressure is spread over two consecutive days; but, as no one would risk waiting until Monday before despatching, practically the whole special traffic was handed to the railway companies on the Saturday, and arrived in London between nine and ten on the Sunday night. The authorities there knew well they were in for a big night, and they had made their preparations accordingly. The strain upon the cartage department may be gauged from the fact that the North-Western Company sent out about 350 van-loads of meat from their Broad Street and Camden goods stations to Smithfield during that one night, effecting delivery in every case in time for the market on the following morning. This was four times the work of an ordinary night, so far as the meat traffic was concerned. The total tonnage of meat dealt with at these two London stations on the Sunday was no less than 877 tons, and the total for the week ending December 23rd, 1903, was 2,214 tons. More than one-third of the total dealt with during this exceptionally busy week had, therefore, to be carted within a single night.

The cattle-show traffic comes a week or two earlier than the dead-meat. For the Islington show no less than 700 head were brought up by rail from the North last year, which is, of course, only a portion of the special livestock traffic carried at this time between Scotland and the South. On the 11th of December last year, the Caledonian Company ran four special livestock trains for the Christmas markets, containing a total of seventy-seven cattle-trucks, heavily laden. The total number of animals passing through Aberdeen by rail during the days when this traffic is at its height averages about 4,000 head, made up of about 2,000 cattle, 1,500 sheep, and 500 pigs. Some of the prize cattle make a round of the provincial shows before coming to Islington. For example, no less than sixty-two animals taken into Birmingham for the Bingley Hall Show were afterwards brought on by the North-Western to London for the great show at the Agricultural Hall.

A prize beast, when travelling by rail, is a personage of distinction. He has his "reserved compartment" on the cattle-train, specially fitted up for his comfort and protection; and when he is doing a round of the shows, the same truck is usually kept for his use throughout his travels, in much the same way as special saloons are provided for eminent human travellers. On arrival in town the beast will walk to the show, if the distance be not too great to impair his "condition." Otherwise he must be "floated"—*i.e.*, conveyed by the railway company in a special form of cart technically known as a "float." At Sheffield there is a big pleasure-fair held during Christmas week, for which a great many passengers and show vans are carried by the Great Central and other railways serving that town. Special trains are run on Christmas Eve for the Christmas markets by the Lancashire and Yorkshire and other northern lines.

In connection with Christmas pantomimes a large amount of special traffic comes upon our railways. Last year the Great Northern Company alone carried about 500 artistes from London, to appear in theatrical entertainments on Boxing Day in various provincial towns, and so great is the traffic in theatrical scenery and properties on this line, before the opening of the pantomime season, that a covered "dock" has to be set aside at King's Cross specially for loading up theatrical freight. For the conveyance of the

big "sets," special open trucks, forty-five feet long, are provided.

The great enemy of the railway companies at Christmas-time is fog. Snow is a special difficulty on the lines in the extreme North, and frost entails some anxiety to the horse and cartage departments; but the fog fiend is a universal foe. The worst railway Christmas on record was that of 1891. About 10 a.m. on Sunday, 20th December of that year, a dense fog descended over the Metropolis and lasted practically without intermission until 8 p.m. on Christmas Day. It was at times so intense that a fog-signalman standing at the foot of a signal-post fifteen or twenty feet high could not see the light in the signal-lamp, and men standing only a few yards apart could not see each other. A shunter standing by a pair of rails could not tell whether it was the main line or a siding, or what siding, and he could only ascertain his exact position by following the rails and seeing where they led him. Sir George Findlay, the late general manager of the London and North-Western Railway, drew up a special report in connection with this memorable fog, from which I have been permitted to take the following details.

On Monday, 21st December, the trains from Euston got away fairly in time, but as the fog continued and the work of sorting and marshalling the carriages got behind, the departures became more and more unpunctual. The climax was reached when, on the Wednesday night, a train which should have left at 10 o'clock did not get away until 12.40 midnight, two hours and forty minutes late! This is believed to be the worst start a train has ever had from Euston. Great difficulties were also caused by the lateness of the Post Office vans in reaching Euston with the outwards-bound mails, owing to the fog in the streets. On the Thursday night all the North mails missed the earlier trains and had to be crowded into the 10 o'clock, which thus occupied two hours in loading.

The fog extended down the line from London to Rugby, and was general in Yorkshire and some parts of Lancashire. All the up trains into London were, therefore, running badly and arriving as much as two or three hours behind time. The result was that in many cases men timed to work certain trains into Euston, and certain other trains out, arrived with the incoming train after the outgoing ones had departed, other men having in the meantime had to be found to take their places on the latter.

As can be readily understood, the fog-signalling became a very serious problem. Owing to the long continuance of the fog, the supply of properly trained men became exhausted, and in many cases unduly long hours had to be worked. In only four cases, however, was it necessary to require men

"ROUGHED" AND READY.
The frost entails some anxiety to the horse department.

to work more than twelve hours continuously, and one of these was due to an accident, the relief man falling and hurting himself on his way to his post. The difficulties under which trains were sorted, marshalled, and made up in the sidings at Euston can be more easily imagined than described, and every man engaged in that service incurred considerable risk every time he went on duty. It was, as Sir George Findlay said, extremely creditable to the discipline and devotion of the staff that the work was carried on at all under such circumstances and did not come absolutely to a stand. It was a surprising fact, and one worth recording, that during the four days, when the shunting and marshalling of the trains was carried on at Euston under the great difficulties above described, there was not the slightest accident to life or limb of any man employed, nor was there any damage to rolling-stock, not even to the extent of a broken buffer-casting.

The severe frost which prevailed all the week helped to delay the trains and embarrass the working. The rails were slippery, and the proper speed could not be maintained even when the line was clear. Moreover, it was necessary to make more than the usual stops with the passenger trains, in order to examine the wheels, etc., and to take water. The troughs for taking water by engines in motion could not be used for fear that the water splashing up would freeze the brake-gear under the carriages. At Crewe, which is the key to the North-Western system, the difficulties were focused. Out of 313 down passenger trains arriving at Crewe during the four days, 80 were half an hour to an hour late, 83 were from one to two hours late, and 15 were over two hours behind time. Out of 324 up passenger trains, 94 were from half an hour to an hour late, 38 were between one and two hours late, and 11 were over two hours in arrear. The rest ran somewhat better, but there was none that was not more or less late. To those who know the normal standard of punctuality attained on the North-Western, these figures are eloquent of complete disorganisation. As to the goods trains, nearly every one was several hours behind time in reaching its destination, and some of them never reached their destination at all. Owing to the impossibility of supplying relays of men to work them, they had to be broken up, and the wagons worked forward in other trains after the pressure was over. In other cases complete trains had to be shunted into sidings, there to remain until after Christmas Day. On 23rd and 24th December there were many cases in which the engine-drivers and brakesmen undoubtedly required relief, but, as it could not be provided, they had to continue at work. They did so cheerfully, recognising the difficulty of the situation, and "there was not a single case," the general manager reported, "in which a man complained of hardship, or any mishap occurred."

There have been foggy Christmases since, but none so bad as this memorable one of 1891. Everyone will join in the wish that it may be long before we have another like that. Under the most favourable conditions, the extra strain imposed upon our railway servants by Christmas travel and traffic is unquestionably great. Under a long spell of fog, it is well-nigh intolerable.

To avoid possible misapprehension, I should, perhaps, say that the railway companies not specifically mentioned in this article are omitted simply because it is not possible to mention every one of them individually. The facts and figures given are intended to be typical of our railway system as a whole. The special pressure of Christmas traffic is general throughout the Kingdom, and the experiences of each line are shared, with slight variations, by all the others.

I have already alluded to the Railway Benevolent Society, but should like, before I close this article, to say a few further words in favour of that excellent institution, the object of which is to provide help in time of need for disabled railwaymen, and for the widows and orphans of those who fall in the service. Since the establishment of the institution in 1858, upwards of £600,000 has been distributed amongst the widows of some 4,600 men killed, 10,700 who died of sickness, and 97,000 who were injured in the performance of their duties; 2,417 widows and disabled servants have received pensions; and 1,549 children of both sexes have been educated and sent into the world, fit and useful members of society. At the present time 1,528 members and widows are receiving annuities of from £10 to £30 each, and 336 children are being reared, trained, and educated in the orphanage at Derby and at other schools. The institution has no sectarian bias, and it is open to all classes of men on all lines of railway in Great Britain and Ireland. It is officially recognised and assisted by the railway companies, controlled and managed by their chief officers, and every proper case is carefully investigated and promptly relieved as far as the funds will allow. The offices are at 133, Seymour Street, Euston Square, London, N.W.

AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

"Here ends this history so far as it concerns science and the outside world. What its end will be as regards Leo and myself is more than I can guess. But we feel that it is not reached. . . . Often I sit alone at night, staring with the eyes of my mind into the blackness of unborn time, and wondering in what shape and form the great drama will be finally developed, and where the scene of its next act will be laid. And when, ultimately, that *final* development occurs, as I have no doubt it must and will occur, in obedience to a fate that never swerves and a purpose which cannot be altered, what will be the part played therein by that beautiful Egyptian Amenartas, the Princess of the royal house of the Pharaohs, for the love of whom the priest Kallikrates broke his vows to Isis, and, pursued by the vengeance of the outraged goddess, fled down the coast of Lybia to meet his doom at Kôr?"—"She," Silver Library Edition, p. 277.

DEDICATION.

TO ANDREW LANG, ESQ.

MY DEAR LANG,—

The appointed years—alas! how many of them—are gone by, leaving Ayesha lovely and loving and ourselves alive. As it was promised in the Caves of Kôr, *She* has returned again.

To you therefore who accepted the first, I offer this further history of one of the various incarnations of that Immortal.

My hope is that after you have read her record, notwithstanding her subtleties and sins, and the shortcomings of her chronicler (no easy office!), you may continue to wear your chain of "loyalty to our lady Ayesha." Such, I confess, is still the fate of your old friend

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

Ditchingham, 1904.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

NOT with a view of conciliating those readers who on principle object to sequels, but as a matter of fact, the Author wishes to say that he does not so regard this book.

Rather does he venture to ask that it should be considered as the conclusion of an imaginative tragedy (if he may so call it) whereof one half has been already published.

This conclusion it was always his desire to write should he be destined to live through those many years which, in obedience to his original design, must be allowed to lapse between the events of the first and second parts of the romance.

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INTRODUCTION.

VERILY and indeed it is the unexpected that happens! Probably if there was one person upon the earth from whom the editor of this, and of a certain previous history, did not expect to hear again, that person was Ludwig Horace Holly. This, too, for a good reason; he believed him to have taken his departure from the earth.

When Mr. Holly last wrote, many, many years ago, it was to transmit the manuscript of "She," and to announce that he and his ward, Leo Vincey, the beloved of the divine Ayesha, were about to travel to Central Asia in the hope, I suppose, that there she would fulfil her promise and appear to them again.

Often I have wondered, idly enough, what happened to them there; whether they were dead, or perhaps droning their lives away as monks in some Thibetan Lamasery, or studying magic and practising asceticism under the tuition of the Eastern Masters, trusting that thus they would build a bridge by which they might pass to the side of their adored Immortal.

Now, at length, when I had not thought of them for months, without a single warning sign, out of the blue as it were, comes the answer to these wonderings!

To think—only to think—that I, the editor aforesaid, from its appearance suspecting something quite familiar and without interest, pushed aside that dingy, unregistered, brown-paper parcel directed in an unknown hand, and for two whole days let it lie forgotten! Indeed, there it might be lying now, had not another person been moved to curiosity, and, opening it, found within a bundle of manuscript badly burned upon the back, and with this, two letters addressed to myself.

Although so great a time had passed since I saw it, and it was shaky now from the author's age or sickness, I knew the writing at once—nobody ever made an "H" with that peculiar twirl under it except Mr. Holly. I tore open the sealed envelope, and sure enough the first thing my eye fell upon was the signature, *L. H. Holly*. It is long since I read anything so eagerly as I did that letter. Here it is:—

"My dear Sir,—

"I have ascertained that you still live, and, strange to say, I still live also—for a little while.

"As soon as I came into touch with civilisation again I found a copy of your book 'She,' or, rather, of my book, and read it—first of all, in a Hindostani translation. My host—he was a minister of some religious body, a man of worthy but prosaic mind—expressed surprise that a 'wild romance' should absorb me so much. I answered that those who had wide experience of the hard facts of life often found interest in romance. Had he known what were the hard facts to which I alluded, I wonder what that excellent person would have said?

"I see that you carried out your part of the business well and faithfully. Every instruction has been obeyed; nothing has been added or taken away. Therefore, to you, to whom some twenty years ago I entrusted the beginning of the history, I wish to entrust its end also. You were the first to learn of *She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed*, who from century to century sat alone, clothed with unchanging loveliness in the sepulchres of Kôr, waiting till her lost love was born again, and Destiny brought him back to her.

"It is right, therefore, that you should be the first to learn also of Ayesha, Spirit and Hesea of the Mountain, the priestess of that Oracle which since the time of Alexander the Great has reigned between the flaming pillars in the Sanctuary, the last holder of the sceptre of Hes or Isis upon the earth. It is right also that to you first among men I should reveal the mystic consummation of the wondrous tragedy which began at Kôr, or perchance far earlier in Egypt and elsewhere.

"I am very ill; I have struggled back to this old house of mine to die, and my end is at hand. I have asked the doctor here, after all is over, to send you the Record—that is, unless I change my mind and burn it first. You will also receive, if you receive anything at all, a case containing several rough sketches which may be of use to you, and a *sistrum*, the instrument that has been always used in the worship of the Nature goddesses of the old Egyptians, Isis and Hathor, which you will see is as beautiful as it is ancient. I give it to you for two reasons: as a token of my gratitude and regard, and as the only piece of evidence that is left to me of the literal truth of what I have written in the accompanying manuscript, where you will find it often mentioned. Perhaps also you will value it as a souvenir of, I suppose, the strangest and loveliest being who ever was, or rather, is. It was her sceptre, the rod of her power, with which I saw her salute the Shadows in the Sanctuary, and her gift to me.

"It has virtues also; some part of Ayesha's might yet haunts the symbol to which even spirits bowed, but if you should discover them, beware how they are used.

"I have neither the strength nor the will to write more. The Record must speak for itself. Do with it what you like, and believe it or not as you like. I care nothing who know that it is true.

"Who and what was Ayesha, nay—what *is* Ayesha? An incarnate essence a materialised spirit of Nature, the unforeseeing, the lovely, the cruel and the immortal; ensouled alone, redeemable only by Humanity and its piteous sacrifice? Say you! I have done with speculations who depart to solve these mysteries.

"I wish you happiness and good fortune. Farewell to you and to all.

"L. Horace Holly."

I laid the letter down, and, filled with sensations that it is useless to attempt to analyse or describe, opened the second envelope, of which I also print the contents, omitting only certain irrelevant portions, and the name of the writer, as, it will be noted, he requests me to do.

This letter, that was dated from a remote place upon the shores of Cumberland, ran as follows—

"Dear Sir,—

"As the doctor who attended Mr. Holly in his last illness, I am obliged, in obedience to a promise that I made to him, to become an intermediary in a somewhat strange business, although in truth it is one of which I know very little, however much it may have interested me. Still, I do so only on the strict understanding that no mention is to

"'My mind is made up, so talk no more.'"

be made of my name in connection with the matter, or of the locality in which I practise.

"About ten days ago I was called in to see Mr. Holly at an old house upon the cliff that for many years remained untenanted except by the caretakers, which house was his property, and had been in his family for generations. The housekeeper who summoned me told me that her master had but just returned from abroad, somewhere in Asia, she said, and that he was very ill with his heart—dying, she believed; both of which suppositions proved to be accurate.

"I found the patient sitting up in bed (to ease his heart), and a strange-looking old man he was. He had dark eyes, small but full of fire and intelligence, a magnificent and snowy-white beard that covered a chest of extraordinary breadth, and hair also white, which encroached upon his forehead and face so much that it met the whiskers upon his cheeks. His arms were remarkable for their length and strength, though one of them seemed to have been much torn by some animal. He told me that a dog had done this, but if so it must have been a dog of unusual power. He was a very ugly man, and yet—forgive the bull—beautiful. I cannot describe what I mean better than by saying that his face was not like the face of any ordinary mortal whom I have met in my limited experience. Were I an artist who wished to portray a wise and benevolent but rather grotesque spirit, I should take that countenance as a model.

"Mr. Holly was somewhat vexed at my being called in, which had been done without his knowledge. Soon we became friendly enough, however, and he expressed gratitude for the relief that I was able to give him, though I could not hope to do more. At different times he talked a good deal of the various countries in which he had travelled, apparently for very many years, upon some strange quest that he never clearly defined to me. Twice also he became light-headed, and spoke, for the most part in languages that I identified as Greek and Arabic; occasionally in English also, when he appeared to be addressing himself to a being who was the object of his veneration, I might almost say of his worship. What he said then, however, I prefer not to repeat, for I heard it in my professional capacity.

"One day he pointed to a rough box made of some foreign wood (the same that I have now duly despatched to you by train), and, giving me your name and address, said that without fail it was to be forwarded to you after his death. Also he asked me to do up a manuscript, which, like the box, was to be sent to you.

"He saw me looking at the last sheets, which had been burned away, and said (I repeat his exact words)—

"'Yes, yes, that can't be helped now, it must go as it is. You see, I made up my mind to destroy it after all, and it was already on the fire when the command came—the clear, unmistakable command—and I snatched it off again.'

"What Mr. Holly meant by this 'command' I do not know, for he would speak no more of the matter.

"I pass on to the last scene. One night about eleven o'clock, knowing that my patient's end was near, I went up to see him, proposing to inject some strychnine to keep the heart going a little longer. Before I reached the house I met the caretaker coming to seek me in a great fright, and asked her if her master was dead. She answered 'No'; but he was *gone*—had got out of bed and, just as he was, barefooted, left the house, and was last seen by her grandson among the very Scotch firs where we were talking. The lad, who was terrified out of his wits, for he thought that he beheld a ghost, had told her so.

"The moonlight was very brilliant that night, especially as fresh snow had fallen, which reflected its rays. I was on foot, and began to search among the firs, till presently just outside of them I found the track of naked feet in the snow. Of course I followed, calling to the housekeeper to go and wake her husband, for no one else lives near by. The spoor proved very easy to trace across the clean sheet of snow. It ran up the slope of a hill behind the house.

"Now, on the crest of this hill is an ancient monument of upright monoliths set there by some primeval people, known locally as the Devil's Ring—a sort of miniature Stonehenge, in fact. I had seen it several times, and happened to have been present not long ago at a meeting of an archæological society when its origin and purpose were discussed. I remember that one learned but somewhat eccentric gentleman read a short paper upon a rude, hooded bust and head that are cut within the chamber of a tall, flat-topped cromlech, or dolmen, which stands alone in the centre of the Ring.

"He said that it was a representation of the Egyptian goddess, Isis, and that this place had once been sacred to some form of

her worship, or, at any rate, to that of a Nature goddess with like attributes, a suggestion which the other learned gentlemen treated as absurd. They declared that Isis had never travelled into Britain, though, for my part, I do not see why the Phœnicians, or even the Romans, who adopted her cult, more or less, should not have brought it here. But I know nothing of such matters and will not discuss them.

"I remembered, also, that Mr. Holly was acquainted with this place, for he had mentioned it to me on the previous day, asking if the stones were still uninjured, as they used to be when he was young. He added also, and the remark struck me, that yonder was where he would wish to die. When I answered that I feared he would never take so long a walk again, I noted that he smiled a little.

"Well, this conversation gave me a clue, and without troubling more about the footprints I went on as fast as I could to the Ring, half a mile or so away. Presently I reached it, and there—yes, there—standing by the cromlech, bareheaded, and clothed in his night-things only, stood Mr. Holly in the snow, the strangest figure, I think, that ever I beheld.

"Indeed, never shall I forget that wild scene. The circle of rough, single stones pointing upwards to the star-strewn sky, intensely lonely and intensely solemn: the tall trilithon towering above them in the centre, its shadow, thrown by the bright moon behind it, lying long and black upon the dazzling sheet of snow, and, standing clear of this shadow so that I could distinguish his every motion, and even the rapt look upon his dying face, the white-draped figure of Mr. Holly. He appeared to be uttering some invocation—in Arabic, I think—for long before I reached him I could catch the tones of his full, sonorous voice, and see his waving, outstretched arms. In his right hand he held the looped sceptre which, by his express wish, I send to you with the drawings. I could see the flash of the jewels strung upon the wires, and, in the great stillness, hear the tinkling of its golden bells.

"Presently, too, I seemed to become aware of another presence, and now you will understand why I desire and must ask that my identity should be suppressed. Naturally enough I do not wish to be mixed up with a superstitious tale which is, on the face of it, impossible and absurd. Yet, under all the circumstances, I think it right to tell you that I saw, or thought I saw, something gather in the shadow of the central dolmen, or emerge from its rude chamber—I know not which for certain—something bright and glorious which gradually took the form of a woman upon whose forehead burned a starlike fire.

"At any rate, the vision or reflection, or whatever it was, startled me so much that I came to a halt under the lee of one of the monoliths, and found myself unable even to call to the distraught man whom I pursued.

"Whilst I stood thus it became clear to me that Mr. Holly also saw something. At least, he turned towards the Radiance in the shadow, uttered one cry—a wild, glad cry, and stepped forward; then seemed to fall *through it* on to his face.

"When I reached the spot, the light had vanished, and all I found was Mr. Holly, his arms still outstretched, and the sceptre gripped tightly in his hand, lying quite dead in the shadow of the trilithon."

The rest of the doctor's letter need not be quoted, as it deals only with certain very improbable explanations of the origin of this Figure of light, the details of the removal of the body, and of how he managed to satisfy the coroner that no inquest was necessary.

The box of which he speaks arrived safely. Of the drawings in it I need say nothing, and of the *sistrum* or sceptre only a few words. It was fashioned of crystal to the well-known shape of the *Crux ansata*, or the emblem of Life of the Egyptians; the rod, the cross, and the loop combined in one. From side to side of this loop ran golden wires, and on these were strung gems of three colours, glittering diamonds, sea-blue sapphires, and blood-red rubies, while to the fourth wire, that at the top, hung four little golden bells.

When I took hold of it first, my arm shook slightly with excitement, and those bells began to sound—a sweet, faint music like to that of chimes heard far away at night in the silence of the sea. I thought, too—but perhaps this was fancy—that a thrill passed from the hallowed and beautiful thing in my body.

On the mystery itself, as it is recorded in the manuscript, I make no comment. Of it and its inner significations every reader must form his or her own judgment. One thing alone is clear to me—on the hypothesis that Mr. Holly tells the truth as to what he and Leo Vincey saw and experienced, which I at least believe—that though sundry interpre-

tations of this mystery were advanced by Ayesha and others, none of them are quite satisfactory.

Indeed, like Mr. Holly, I incline to the theory that SHE, if I may still call her by that name, although it is seldom given to her in these pages, put forward some of them, such as the vague Isis-myth, and the wondrous picture-story of the mountain-fire, as mere veils to hide the truth, which it was her purpose to reveal at last in that song she never sang.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOUBLE SIGN.

HARD on twenty years have gone by since that night of Leo's Vision—the most awful years, perhaps, which were ever endured by men—twenty years of search and hardship ending in soul-shaking wonder and amazement.

My death is very near to me, and of this I am glad, for I desire to pursue the quest in other realms, as it has been promised to me that I shall do. I desire to learn the beginning and the end of the spiritual drama of which it has been my strange lot to read some pages upon earth.

I, Ludwig Horace Holly, have been very ill; they carried me, more dead than alive, down those mountains whose lowest slopes I can see from my window, for I write this on the northern frontiers of India. Indeed, any other man had long since perished, but Destiny kept my breath in me, perhaps that a record might remain. I must bide here a month or two till I am strong enough to travel homewards, for I have a fancy to die in the place where I was born. So while I have strength I will put the story down, or at least those parts of it that are most essential, for much can, or at any rate must be omitted. I shrink from attempting too long a book, though my notes and memory would furnish me with sufficient material for volumes.

I will begin with the Vision.

After Leo Vincey and I came back from Africa in 1885, desiring solitude, which indeed we needed sorely to recover from the fearful shock we had experienced, and to give us time and opportunity to think, we went to an old house upon the shores of Cumberland that has belonged to my family for many generations. This house, unless somebody has taken it believing me to be dead, is still my property, and thither I travel to die.

Those whose eyes read the words I write, if any should ever read them, may ask—What shock?

Well, I am Horace Holly, and my companion, my beloved friend, my son in the spirit whom I reared from infancy was—nay, is—Leo Vincey.

We are those men who, following an ancient clue, travelled to the caves of Kôr in Central Africa, and there discovered her whom we sought, the immortal *She-who-must-be-obeyed*. In Leo she found her love, that re-born Kallikrates, the Grecian priest of Isis whom some two thousand years before she had slain in her jealous rage, thus executing on him the judgment of the angry goddess. In her also I found the divinity whom I was doomed to worship from afar, not with the flesh, for that is all lost and gone from me, but, what is sorer still, because its burden is undying, with the will and soul which animate a man throughout the countless æons of his being. The flesh dies, or at least it changes, and its passions pass, but that other passion of the spirit—that longing for oneness—is undying as itself.

What crime have I committed that this sore punishment should be laid upon me? Yet, in truth, is it a punishment? May it not prove to be but that black and terrible Gate which leads to the joyous palace of Rewards? She swore that I should ever be her friend and his and dwell with them eternally, and I believe her.

For how many winters did we wander among the icy hills and deserts! Still, at length, the Messenger came and led us to the Mountain, and on the Mountain we found the Shrine, and in the Shrine the Spirit. May not these things be an allegory prepared for our instruction? I will take comfort. I will hope that it is so. Nay, I am sure that it is so.

It will be remembered that in Kôr we found the immortal woman. There before the flashing rays and vapours of the Pillar of Life she declared her mystic love, and then in our very sight was swept to a doom so horrible that even now, after all which has been and gone, I shiver at its recollection. Yet what were Ayesha's last words? "*Forget me not . . . have pity on my shame. I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true.*"

Well, I cannot set out that history afresh. Moreover, it is written; the man whom I trusted in the matter did not fail me, and

"'At one point she paused, and I looked downwards.'"

the book he made of it seems to be known throughout the world, for I have found it here in English, yes, and read it first translated into Hindostani. To it then I refer the curious.

In that house upon the desolate seashore of Cumberland, we dwelt a year, mourning the lost, seeking an avenue by which it might be found again and discovering none. Here our strength came back to us, and Leo's hair, that had been whitened in the horror of the Caves, grew again from grey to golden. His beauty returned to him also, so that his face was as it had been, only purified and saddened.

Well I remember that night—and the hour of illumination. We were heart-broken, we were in despair. We sought signs and could find none. The dead remained dead to us and no answer came to all our crying.

It was a sullen August evening, and after we had dined we walked upon the shore, listening to the slow surge of the waves and watching the lightning flicker from the bosom of a distant cloud. In silence we walked, till at last Leo groaned—it was more of a sob than a groan—and clasped my arm.

"I can bear it no longer, Horace," he said—for so he called me now—"I am in torment. The desire to see Ayesha once more saps my brain. Without hope I shall go quite mad. And I am strong, I may live another fifty years."

"What then can you do?" I asked.

"I can take a short road to knowledge—or to peace," he answered solemnly. "I can die, and die I will—yes, to-night."

I turned upon him angrily, for his words filled me with fear.

"Leo, you are a coward!" I said. "Cannot you bear your part of pain as—others do?"

"You mean as you do, Horace," he answered with a dreary laugh, "for on you also the curse lies—with less cause. Well, you are stronger than I am, and more tough; perhaps because you have lived longer. No, I cannot bear it. I will die."

"It is a crime," I said, "the greatest insult you can offer to the Power that made you, to cast back its gift of life as a thing outworn, contemptible and despised. A crime, I say, which will bring with it worse punishment than any you can dream; perhaps even the punishment of everlasting separation."

"Does a man stretched in some torture-den commit a crime if he snatches a knife and kills himself, Horace? Perhaps; but surely that sin should find forgiveness—if torn flesh and quivering nerves may plead for mercy. I am such a man, and I will use that knife and take my chance. She is dead, and in death at least I shall be nearer her."

"Why so, Leo? For aught you know, Ayesha may be living."

"No; for then she would have given me some sign. My mind is made up, so talk no more, or, if talk we must, let it be of other things."

Then I pleaded with him, though with little hope, for I saw that what I had feared for long was come to pass. Leo was mad; shock and sorrow had destroyed his reason. Had it not been so, he, in his own way a very religious man, one who held, as I knew, strict opinions on such matters, would never have purposed to commit the wickedness of suicide.

"Leo," I said, "are you so heartless that you would leave me here alone? Do you pay me thus for all my love and care, and wish to drive me to my death? Do so if you will, and my blood be on your head!"

"Your blood! Why your blood, Horace?"

"Because that road is broad, and two can travel it. We have lived long years together and together endured much; I am sure that we shall not be long parted."

Then the tables were turned and he grew afraid for me. But I only answered: "If you die, I tell you that I shall die also. It will certainly kill me."

So Leo gave way. "Well," he exclaimed suddenly, "I promise you it shall not be to-night. Let us give Life another chance."

"Good," I answered; but I went to my bed full of fear. For I was certain that this desire of death, having once taken hold of him, would grow and grow, until at length it became too strong, and then—then I should wither and die who could not live on alone. In my despair I threw out my soul towards that of her who was departed.

"Ayesha!" I cried, "if you have any power, if in any way it is permitted, show that you still live, and save your lover from this sin and me from a broken heart. Have pity on his sorrow and breathe hope into his soul, for without hope Leo cannot live, and without him I shall not live."

Then, worn out, I slept.

I was aroused by the voice of Leo speaking to me in low, excited tones through the darkness.

"Horace," he said, "Horace, my friend, my father, listen!"

In an instant I was wide awake, every nerve and fibre of me, for the tones of his

voice told me that something had happened which bore upon our destinies.

"Let me light a candle first," I said.

"Never mind the candle, Horace; I would rather speak in the dark. I went to sleep, and I dreamed the most vivid dream that ever came to me. I seemed to stand under the vault of heaven, it was black, black, not a star shone in it, and a great loneliness possessed me. Then suddenly high up in the vault, miles and miles away, I saw a little light and thought that a planet had appeared to keep me company. The light began to descend slowly, like a floating flake of fire. Down it sank, and down and down, till it was but just above me, and I perceived that it was shaped like a tongue or fan of flame. At the height of my head from the ground it stopped and stood steady, and by its ghostly radiance I saw that beneath was the shape of a woman, and that the flame burned upon her forehead. The radiance gathered strength, and now I saw the woman.

"Horace, it was Ayesha herself, her eyes, her lovely face, her cloudy hair; and she looked at me sadly, reproachfully, I thought, as one might who says: 'Why did you doubt?'

"I tried to speak to her, but my lips were dumb. I tried to advance and to embrace her—my arms would not move. There was a barrier between us. She lifted her hand and beckoned as though bidding me to follow her.

"Then she glided away, and, Horace, my spirit seemed to loose itself from the body and to be given the power to follow. We passed swiftly eastward, over lands and seas, and—I knew the road. At one point she paused, and I looked downwards. Beneath, shining in the moonlight, appeared the ruined palaces of Kôr, and there, not far away, was the gulf we trod together.

"Onward above the marshes, and now we stood upon the Ethiopian's Head, and gathered round, watching us earnestly, were the faces of the Arabs, our companions who drowned in the sea beneath. Job was among them also, and he smiled at me sadly and shook his head, as though he wished to accompany us and could not.

"Across the sea again, across the sandy deserts, across more sea, and the shores of India lay beneath us. Then northward, ever northward, above the plains, till we reached a place of mountains capped with eternal snow. We passed them and stayed for an instant above a building set upon the brow of a plateau. It was a monastery, for old monks droned prayers upon its terrace. I shall know it again, for it is built in the shape of a half-moon, and in front of it sits the gigantic, ruined statue of a god who gazes everlastingly across the desert. I knew, how I cannot say, that now we were far past the furthest borders of Thibet, and that in front of us lay untrodden lands. More mountains stretched beyond that desert—a sea of snowy peaks, hundreds and hundreds of them.

"Near to the monastery, jutting out into the plain like some rocky headland, rose a solitary hill, higher than all behind. We stood upon its snowy crest and waited, till presently, above the mountains and the desert at our feet shot a sudden beam of light, that beat upon us like some signal flashed across the sea. On we went, floating down the beam—on over the desert and the mountains, across a great flat land beyond, in which were many villages and a city on a mound, till we lit upon a towering peak. Then I saw that this peak was loop-shaped like the symbol of Life of the Egyptians—the *crux ansata*—and supported by a lava stem hundreds of feet in height. Also I saw that the fire which shone through it rose from the crater of a volcano beyond. Upon the very crest of this loop we rested awhile, till the Shadow of Ayesha pointed downward with its hand, smiled and vanished. Then I awoke.

"Horace, I tell you that the sign has come to us."

His voice died away in the darkness, but I sat still, brooding over what I had heard. Leo groped his way to me and, seizing my arm, shook it.

"Are you asleep?" he asked angrily. "Speak, man, speak!"

"No," I answered, "never was I more awake. Give me time."

Then I rose, and going to the open window, drew up the blind and stood there staring at the sky, which grew pearl-hued with the first faint tinge of dawn. Leo came also and leant upon the window-sill, and I could feel that his body was trembling as though with cold. Clearly he was much moved.

"You talk of a sign," I said to him, "but in your sign I see nothing but a wild dream."

"It was no dream," he broke in fiercely; "it was a vision."

"A vision, then, if you will; but there are visions true and false, and how can we know that this is true? Listen, Leo. What is there in all that wonderful tale which could not

have been fashioned in your own brain, distraught as it is almost to madness with your sorrow and your longings? You dreamed that you were alone in the vast universe. Well, is not every living creature thus alone? You dreamed that the shadowy shape of Ayesha came to you. Has it ever left your side? You dreamed that she led you over sea and land, past places haunted by your memory, above the mysterious mountains of the Unknown to an undiscovered peak. Does she not thus lead you through life to that peak which lies beyond the Gates of Death? You dreamed——"

"Oh! no more of it!" he exclaimed. "What I saw, I saw, and that I shall follow. Think as you will, Horace, and do what you will. To-morrow I start for India, with you if you choose to come; if not, without you."

"You speak roughly, Leo," I said. "You forget that *I* have had no sign, and that the nightmare of a man so near to insanity that but a few hours ago he was determined upon suicide, will be a poor staff to lean on when we are perishing in the snows of Central Asia. A mixed vision, this of yours, Leo, with its mountain peak shaped like a *crux ansata* and the rest. Do you suggest that Ayesha is reincarnated in Central Asia—as a female Grand Lama or something of that sort?"

"I never thought of it, but why not?" asked Leo quietly. "Do you remember a certain scene in the Caves of Kôr yonder, when the living looked upon the dead, and dead and living were the same? And do you remember what Ayesha swore, that she would come again—yes, to this world; and how could that be except by re-birth, or, what is the same thing, by the transmigration of the spirit?"

I did not answer this argument. I was struggling with myself.

"No sign has come to me," I said, "and yet I have had a part in the play—humble enough, I admit—and I believe that I have still a part."

"No," he said, "no sign has come to you. I wish that it had. Oh! how I wish you could be convinced as I am, Horace!"

Then we were silent for a long while, silent, with our eyes fixed upon the sky.

* * * * *

It was a stormy dawn. Clouds in fantastic masses hung upon the ocean. One of them was like a great mountain, and we watched it idly. It changed its shape, the crest of it grew hollow like a crater. From this crater sprang a projecting cloud, a rough pillar with a knob or lump resting on its top. Suddenly the rays of the risen sun struck upon this mountain and the column, and they turned white like snow. Then as though melted by those fiery arrows, the centre of the excrescence above the pillar thinned out and vanished, leaving an enormous loop of inky cloud.

"Look," said Leo in a low, frightened voice, "that is the shape of the mountain which I saw in my vision. There upon it is the black loop, and there through it shines the fire. *It would seem that the sign is for both of us, Horace.*"

I looked and looked again till presently the vast loop vanished into the blue of heaven. Then I turned and said—

"I will come with you to Central Asia, Leo."

CHAPTER II.

THE LAMASERY.

SIXTEEN years had passed since that night vigil in the old Cumberland house, and, behold! we two, Leo and I, were still travelling, still searching for that mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life which never, never could be found.

Our adventures would fill volumes, but of what use is it to record them? Many of a similar nature are already written of in books; those that we endured were more prolonged, that is all. Five years we spent in Thibet, for the most part as guests of various monasteries, where we studied the law and traditions of the Lamas. Here we were once sentenced to death in punishment for having visited a forbidden city, but escaped through the kindness of a Chinese official.

Leaving Thibet, we wandered east and west and north, thousands and thousands of miles, sojourning amongst many tribes in Chinese territory and elsewhere, learning many tongues, enduring much hardship. We would hear a legend of a place, say nine hundred miles away, and spend two years in reaching it, to find, when we came there, nothing.

And so the time went on. Yet never once did we think of giving up the quest and returning, since, before we started, we had sworn an oath that we would achieve or die. Indeed, we ought to have died a score of times, yet always were preserved, most mysteriously preserved.

Now we were in a country where, so far as I could learn, no European had ever set a foot. In a part of the vast land called

"'See there!' he said, pointing to something dim and enormous."

Turkestan there is a great lake named Balhkash, of which we visited the shores. Two hundred miles or so to the westward is a range of mighty mountains marked on the maps as Arkarty-Tau, on which we spent a year, and five hundred or so to the eastward are other mountains called Cherga, whither we journeyed at last, having explored the triple ranges of the Tau.

Here it was that at last our true adventures began. On one of the spurs of these awful Cherga mountains—it is unmarked on any map—we well-nigh perished of starvation. The winter was coming on and we could find no game. The last traveller we had met, hundreds of miles south, told us that on that range was a monastery inhabited by Lamas of surpassing holiness. He said that they dwelt in this wild land, over which no Power claimed dominion and where no tribes lived, to acquire "merit," with no other company than that of their own pious contemplations. We did not believe in its existence, still we were searching for that monastery, driven onward by the blind fatalism which was our only guide through all these endless wanderings. As we were starving and could find no "argals"—that is, fuel with which to make a fire—we walked all night by the light of the moon, driving between us a single yak—for now we had no attendant, the last having died a year before.

He was a noble beast, that yak, and had the best constitution of any animal I ever knew, though now, like his masters, he was near his end. Not that he was over-laden, for a few rifle cartridges, about a hundred and fifty, the remnant of a store which we had fortunately been able to buy from a caravan two years before, some money in gold and silver, a little tea, and a bundle of skin rugs and sheepskin garments were his burden. On, on we trudged across a plateau of snow, having the great mountains on our right, till at length the yak gave a sigh and stopped. So we stopped also, because we must, and, wrapping ourselves in the skin rugs, sat down in the snow to wait for daylight.

"We shall have to kill him and eat his flesh raw," I said, patting the poor yak that lay patiently at our side.

"Perhaps we may find game in the morning," answered Leo, still hopeful.

"And perhaps we may not, in which case we must die."

"Very good," he replied, "then let us die. It is the last resource of failure. We shall have done our best."

"Certainly, Leo, we shall have done our best, if sixteen years of tramping over mountains and through eternal snows in pursuit of a dream of the night can be called best."

"You know what I believe," he answered stubbornly, and there was silence between us, for here arguments did not avail. Also even then I could not think that all our toils and sufferings would be in vain.

The dawn came, and by its light we looked at one another anxiously, each of us desiring to see what strength was left to his companion. Wild creatures we should have seemed to the eyes of any civilised person. Leo was now over forty years of age, and certainly his maturity had fulfilled the promise of his youth, for a more magnificent man I never knew. Very tall, although he seemed spare to the eye, his girth matched his height, and those many years of desert life had turned his muscles to steel. His hair had grown long, like my own, for it was a protection from sun and cold, and hung upon his neck, a curling, golden mane, as his great beard hung upon his breast, spreading outwards almost to the massive shoulders. The face, too—what could be seen of it—was beautiful, though burnt brown with weather; refined and full of thought, sombre almost, and in it, clear as crystal, steady as stars, shone his large grey eyes.

And I—I was what I have always been—ugly and hirsute, iron-grey now also, but, in spite of my sixty odd years, still wonderfully strong, for my strength seemed to increase with time, and my health was perfect. In fact, during all this period of rough travels, although now and again we had met with accidents which laid us up for awhile, neither of us had known a day of sickness. Hardship seemed to have turned our constitutions to iron and made them impervious to every human ailment. Or was this because we alone amongst living men had once inhaled the breath of the Essence of Life?

Our fears relieved—for, notwithstanding our foodless night, as yet neither of us showed any signs of exhaustion—we turned to contemplate the landscape. At our feet, beyond a little belt of fertile soil, began a great desert of the sort with which we were familiar — sandy, salt-encrusted, treeless, waterless, and here and there streaked with the first snows of winter. Beyond it, eighty or a hundred miles away—in that lucent atmosphere it was impossible to say how far exactly—rose more mountains, a veritable

sea of them, of which the white peaks soared upwards by scores.

As the golden rays of the rising sun touched their snows to splendour, I saw Leo's eyes become troubled. Swiftly he turned and looked along the edge of the desert.

"See there!" he said, pointing to something dim and enormous. Presently the light reached it also. It was a mighty mountain, not more than ten miles away, that stood out by itself among the sands. Then he turned once more, and with his back to the desert stared at the slope of the hills, along the base of which we had been travelling. As yet they were in gloom, for the sun was behind them, but presently light began to flow over their crests like a flood. Down it crept, lower, and yet lower, till it reached a little plateau not three hundred yards above us. There, on the edge of the plateau, looking out solemnly across the waste, sat a great ruined idol, a colossal Buddha, while to the rear of the idol, built of yellow stone, appeared the low, crescent-shaped mass of a monastery.

"At last!" cried Leo, "oh, Heaven! at last!" and, flinging himself down, he buried his face in the snow as though to hide it there, lest I should read something written on it which he did not desire that even I should see.

I let him lie a space, understanding what was passing in his heart, and indeed in mine also. Then going to the yak, that, poor brute, had no share in these joyous emotions, but only lowed and looked round with hungry eyes, I piled the sheepskin rugs on to its back. This done, I laid my hand on Leo's shoulder, saying, in the most matter-of-fact voice I could command—

"Come. If that place is not deserted, we may find food and shelter there, and it is beginning to storm again."

He rose without a word, brushed the snow from his beard and garments, and came to help me to lift the yak to its feet, for the worn-out beast was too stiff and weak to rise of itself. Glancing at him covertly, I saw on Leo's face a very strange and happy look; a great peace appeared to possess him.

We plunged upwards through the snow slope, dragging the yak with us, to the terrace whereon the monastery was built. Nobody seemed to be about there, nor could I discern any footprints. Was the place but a ruin? We had found many such; indeed, this ancient land is full of buildings that had once served as the homes of men, learned and pious enough after their own fashion, who lived and died hundreds, or even thousands, of years ago, long before our Western civilisation came into being.

My heart, also my stomach, which was starving, sank at the thought; but while I gazed doubtfully, a little coil of blue smoke sprang from a chimney, and never, I think, did I see a more joyful sight. In the centre of the edifice was a large building, evidently the temple, but nearer to us I saw a small door, almost above which the smoke appeared. To this door I went and knocked, calling aloud—

"Open! open, holy Lamas! Strangers seek your charity." After a while there was a sound of shuffling feet, and the door creaked upon its hinges, revealing an old, old man, clad in tattered, yellow garments.

"Who is it? Who is it?" he exclaimed, blinking at me through a pair of horn spectacles. "Who comes to disturb our solitude, the solitude of the holy Lamas of the Mountains?"

"Travellers, Sacred One, who have had enough of solitude," I answered in his own dialect, with which I was well acquainted. "Travellers who are starving and who ask your charity, which," I added, "by the Rule you cannot refuse."

He stared at us through his horn spectacles, and, able to make nothing of our faces, let his glance fall to our garments, which were as ragged as his own and of much the same pattern. Indeed, they were those of Thibetan monks, including a kind of quilted petticoat and an outer vestment not unlike an Eastern *burnous*. We had adopted them because we had no others. Also they protected us from the rigours of the climate and from remark, had there been any to remark upon them.

"Are you Lamas?" he asked doubtfully, "and if so, of what monastery?"

"Lamas sure enough," I answered, "who belong to a monastery called the World, where, alas! one grows hungry."

The reply seemed to please him, for he chuckled a little, then shook his head, saying—

"It is against our custom to admit strangers unless they be of our own faith, which I am sure you are not."

"And much more is it against your Rule, holy Khubilghan," for so these abbots are entitled, "to suffer strangers to starve"; and I quoted a well-known passage from the sayings of Buddha which fitted the point precisely.

"I perceive that you are instructed in the Books," he exclaimed, with wonder on his yellow, wrinkled face, "and to such we cannot refuse shelter. Come in, brethren of the monastery called the World. But stay, there is the yak, who also has claims upon our charity," and, turning, he struck upon a gong or bell which hung within the door.

At the sound another man appeared, more wrinkled and to all appearance older than the first, who stared at us open-mouthed.

"Brother," said the abbot, "shut that great mouth of yours, lest an evil spirit should fly down it; take this poor yak and give it fodder with the other cattle."

So we unstrapped our belongings from the back of the beast, and the old fellow, whose grandiloquent title was "Master of the Herds," led it away.

When it had gone, not too willingly—for our faithful friend disliked parting from us and distrusted this new guide—the abbot, who was named Kou-en, led us into the living-room, or rather the kitchen, of the monastery, for it served both purposes. Here we found the rest of the monks, about twelve in all, gathered round the fire of which we had seen the smoke, and engaged, one of them in preparing the morning meal, and the rest in warming themselves.

They were all old men; the youngest could not have been less than sixty-five. To these we were solemnly introduced as "Brethren of the Monastery called the World, where folk grow hungry," for the abbot Kou-en could not make up his mind to part from this little joke.

They stared at us, they rubbed their thin hands, they bowed and wished us well, and evidently were delighted at our arrival. This was not strange, however, seeing that ours were the first new faces which they had seen for four long years.

Nor did they stop at words, for while they made water hot for us to wash in, two of them went to prepare a room, and others drew off our rough hide boots and thick outer garments and brought us slippers for our feet. Then they led us to the guest-chamber, which they informed us was a "propitious place," for once it had been slept in by a noted saint. Here a fire was lit, and, wonder of wonders! clean garments, including linen, all of them ancient and faded, but of good quality, were brought for us to put on.

So we washed—yes, actually washed all over—and having arrayed ourselves in the robes, which were somewhat small for Leo, struck the bell that hung in the room, and were conducted by a monk who answered it, back to the kitchen, where the meal was now served. It consisted of a kind of porridge, to which was added new milk brought in by the "Master of the Herds," dried fish from a lake, and buttered tea, the last two luxuries produced in our special honour. Never had food tasted more delicious to us, and, I may add, never did we eat more. Indeed, at last I was obliged to request Leo to stop, for I saw the monks staring at him and heard the old abbot chuckling to himself—

"Oho! The Monastery called the World, where folk grow *hungry*," to which another monk, who was called "The Master of the Provisions," replied uneasily that if we went on like this, their store of food would scarcely last the winter. So we finished at length, feeling—as some book of maxims which I can remember in my youth said all polite people should do—that we could eat more, and much impressed our hosts by chanting a long Buddhist grace.

"Their feet are in the Path! Their feet are in the Path!" they said, astonished.

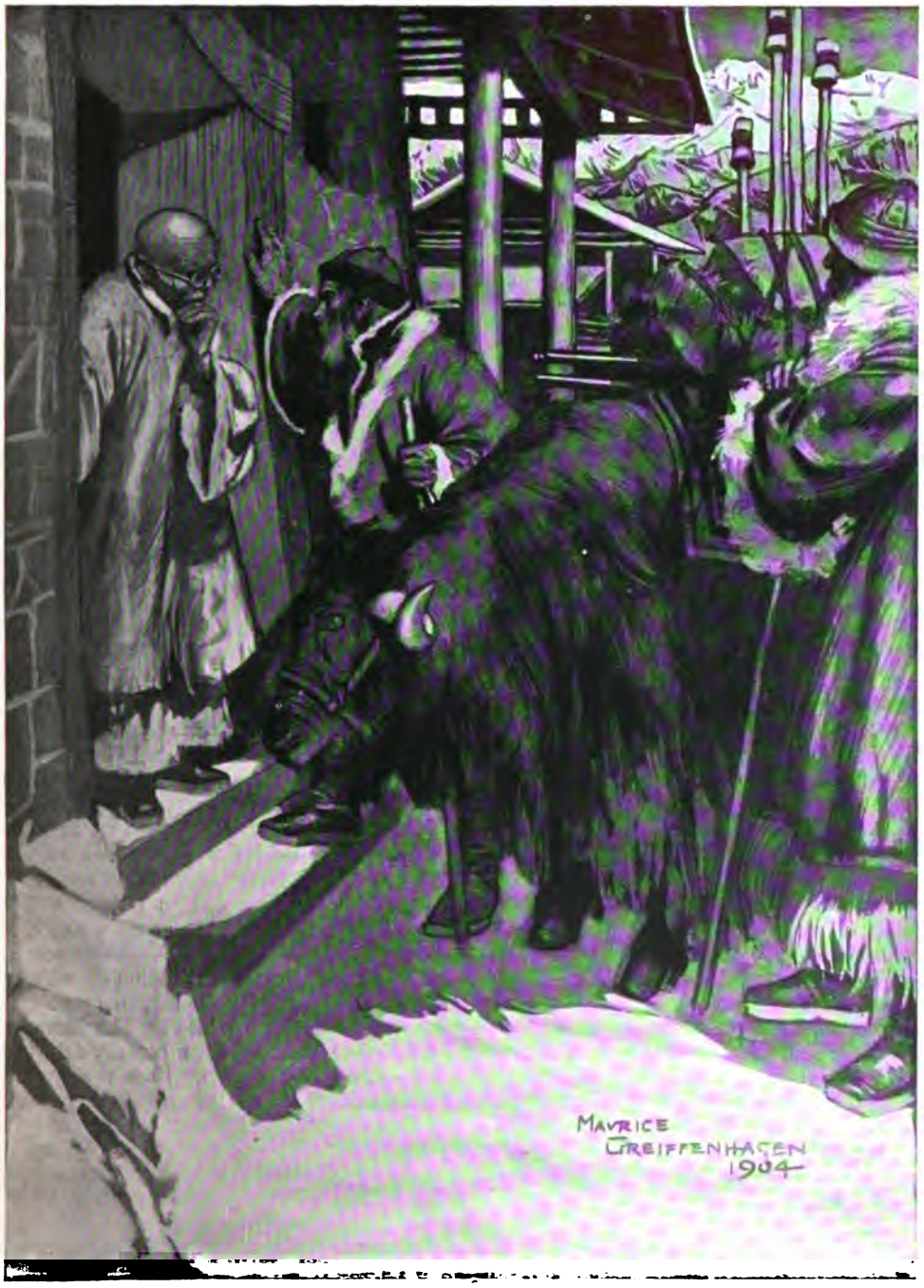
"Yes," replied Leo, "they have been in it for sixteen years of our present incarnation. But we are only beginners, for you, holy Ones, know how star-high, how ocean-wide, and how desert-long is that path. Indeed, it is to be instructed as to the right way of walking therein that we have been miraculously directed by a dream to seek you out, as the most pious, the most saintly, and the most learned of all the Lamas in these parts."

"Yes, certainly we are that," answered the abbot Kou-en, "seeing that there is no other monastery within five months' journey," and again he chuckled, "though, alas!" he added with a pathetic little sigh, "our numbers grow few."

After this we asked leave to retire to our chamber in order to rest, and there, upon very good imitations of beds, we slept solidly for four-and-twenty hours, rising at last perfectly refreshed and well.

Such was our introduction to the Monastery of the Mountains—for it had no other name—where we were destined to spend the next six months of our lives. Within a few days—for they were not long in giving us their complete confidence—those good-hearted and simple old monks told us all their history.

It seemed that of old time there was a Lamasery here, in which dwelt several hundred brethren. This, indeed, was ob-



"'Who is it? Who is it?' he exclaimed, blinking at me through a pair of horn spectacles."

viously true, for the place was enormous, although for the most part ruined, and, as the weather-worn statue of Buddha showed, very ancient. The story ran, according to the old abbot, that two centuries or so before, the monks had been killed out by some fierce tribe who lived beyond the desert and across the distant mountains, which tribe were heretics and worshippers of fire. Only a few of them escaped to bring the sad news to other communities, and for five generations no attempt was made to reoccupy the place.

At length it was revealed to him, our friend Kou-en, when a young man, that he was a reincarnation of one of the old monks of this monastery, who also was named Kou-en, and that it was his duty during his present life to return thither, as by so doing he would win much merit and receive many wonderful revelations. So he gathered a band of zealots and, with the blessing and consent of his superiors, they started out and, after many hardships and losses, found and took possession of the place, repairing it sufficiently for their needs.

This happened about fifty years before, and here they had dwelt ever since, only communicating occasionally with the outside world. At first their numbers were recruited from time to time by new brethren, but at length these ceased to come, with the result that the community was dying out.

"And what then?" I asked.

"And then," the abbot answered, "nothing. We have acquired much merit; we have been blest with many revelations, and, after the repose we have earned in Devachan, our lots in future existences will be easier. What more can we ask or desire, removed as we are from all the temptations of the world?"

For the rest, in the intervals of their endless prayers, and still more endless contemplations, they were husbandmen, cultivating the soil, which was fertile at the foot of the mountain, and tending their herd of yaks. Thus they wore away their blameless lives until at last they died of old age, and, as they believed—and who shall say that they were wrong?—the eternal round repeated itself elsewhere.

* * * * *

Immediately after—indeed, on the very day of our arrival at the monastery, the winter began in earnest, with bitter cold and snowstorms so heavy and frequent that all the desert was covered deep. Very soon it became obvious to us that here we must stay until the spring, since to attempt to move in any direction would be to perish. With some misgivings we explained this to the abbot Kou-en, offering to remove to one of the empty rooms in the ruined part of the building, supporting ourselves with fish that we could catch by cutting a hole in the ice of the lake above the monastery, and, if we were able to find any, on game, which we might trap or shoot in the scrublike forest of stunted pines and junipers that grew around its border. But he would listen to no such thing. We had been sent to be their guests, he said, and their guests we should remain for so long as might be convenient to us. Would we lay upon them the burden of the sin of inhospitality? Besides, he remarked with his chuckle—

"We who dwell alone like to hear about that other great monastery called the World, where the monks are not so favoured as we who are set in this blessed situation, and where folk even go hungry in body, and," he added, "in soul."

Indeed, as we soon found out, the dear old man's object was to keep our feet in the Path until we reached the goal of Truth, or, in other words, became excellent Lamas like himself and his flock.

So we walked in the Path, as we had done in many another Lamasery, and assisted at the long prayers in the ruined temple, and studied the *Kandjur*, or "Translation of the Words" of Buddha, which is their Bible, and a very long one, and generally showed that our "minds were open." Also we expounded to them the doctrines of our own faith, and greatly delighted were they to find so many points of similarity between it and theirs. Indeed, I am not certain but that if we could have stopped there long enough, say ten years, we might have persuaded some of them to accept a new revelation of which we were the prophets. Further, in spare hours we told them many tales of "The Monastery called the World," and it was really delightful, and in a sense piteous, to see the joy with which they listened to these stories of wondrous countries and new races of men; they who knew only of Russia and China and some semi-savage tribes, inhabitants of the mountains and the deserts.

"It is right for us to learn all this," they declared, "for, who knows, perhaps in future incarnations we may become inhabitants of these places."

But though the time passed thus in comfort and, indeed, compared to many of our experiences, in luxury, oh! our hearts were hungry, for in them burned the consuming

fire of our quest. We felt that we were on the threshold—yes, we knew it, we knew it, and yet our wretched physical limitations made it impossible for us to advance by a single step. On the desert beneath fell the snow, moreover great winds arose suddenly that drove those snows like dust, piling them in heaps as high as trees, beneath which any unfortunate traveller would be buried. Here we must wait, there was nothing else to be done.

One alleviation we found, and only one. In a ruined room of the monastery was a library of many volumes, placed there, doubtless, by the monks who were massacred in times bygone. These had been more or less cared for and rearranged by their successors, who gave us liberty to examine them as often as we pleased. Truly it was a strange collection, and I should imagine of priceless value, for among them were to be found Buddhistic, Sivaistic and Shamanistic writings that we had never before seen or heard of, together with the lives of a multitude of Bodhisatvas, or distinguished saints, written in various tongues, some of which we did not understand.

What proved more interesting to us, however, was a diary in many tomes that for generations had been kept by the Khubilghans or abbots of the old Lamasery, in which every event of importance was recorded in great detail. Turning over the pages of one of the last volumes of this diary, written apparently about two hundred and fifty years earlier, and shortly before the destruction of the monastery, we came upon an entry of which the following—for I can only quote from memory—is the substance :—

"In the summer of this year, after a very great sandstorm, a brother (the name was given, but I forget it) found in the desert a man of the people who dwell beyond the Far Mountains, of whom rumours have reached this Lamasery from time to time. He was living, but beside him were the bodies of two of his companions, who had been overwhelmed by sand and thirst. He was very fierce-looking. He refused to say how he came into the desert, telling us only that he had followed the road known to the ancients before communication between his people and the outer world ceased. We gathered, however, that his brethren with whom he fled had committed some crime for which they had been condemned to die, and that he had accompanied them in their flight. He told us that there was a fine country beyond the mountains, fertile, but plagued with droughts and earthquakes, which latter, indeed, we often feel here.

"The people of that country were, he said, warlike and very numerous, but followed agriculture. They had always lived there, though ruled by monarchs who were descendants of the Greek king called Alexander, who conquered much country to the south-west of us. This may be true, as our records tell us that about two thousand years ago an army sent by that invader penetrated to these parts, though of his being with them nothing is said.

"The stranger-man told us also that his people worship a priestess called Hes or the Hesea, who is said to rule from generation to generation. She lives in a great mountain, apart, and is feared and adored by all, but is not the queen of the country, in the government of which she seldom interferes. To her, however, sacrifices are offered, and he who incurs her vengeance dies, so that even the monarchs of that land are afraid of her. Still their subjects often fight, for they hate each other.

"We answered that he lied when he said that this woman was immortal—for that was what we supposed he meant—since nothing is immortal; also we laughed at his tale of her power. This made the man very angry. Indeed, he declared that our Buddha was not so strong as this priestess, and that she would show it by being avenged upon us.

"After this we gave him food and turned him out of the Lamasery, and he went, saying that when he returned we should learn who spoke the truth. We do not know what became of him, and he refused to reveal to us the road to his country, which lies beyond the desert and the Far Mountains. We think that perhaps he was an evil spirit sent to frighten us, in which he did not succeed."

Such is a *précis* of this strange entry, the discovery of which, vague as it was, thrilled us with hope and excitement. Nothing more appeared about the man or his country, but within a little over a year from that date the diary of the abbot came to a sudden end without any indication that unusual events had occurred or were expected.

Indeed, the last item written in the parchment book mentioned the preparation of certain new lands to be used for the sowing of grain in future seasons, which suggested that the brethren neither feared nor expected disturbance. We wondered whether the man from beyond the mountains was as good as

his word and had brought down the vengeance of that priestess called the Hesea upon the community which sheltered him. Also we wondered—ah! how we wondered!—who and what this Hesea might be.

On the day following this discovery we prayed the abbot, Kou-en, to accompany us to the library, and having read him the passage, asked if he knew anything of the matter. He swayed his wise old head, which always reminded me of that of a tortoise, and answered—

"A little. Very little, and that mostly about the army of the Greek king who is mentioned in the writing."

We inquired what he could possibly know of this matter, whereon Kou-en replied calmly—

"In those days when the faith of the Holy One was still young, I dwelt as a humble brother in this very monastery, which was one of the first built, and I saw the army pass, that is all. That," he added meditatively, "was in my fiftieth incarnation of this present Round—no, I am thinking of another army—in my seventy-third." *

Here Leo began a great laugh, but I managed to kick him beneath the table, and he turned it into a sneeze. This was fortunate, as such ribald merriment would have hurt the old man's feelings terribly. After all, also, as Leo himself had once said, surely we were not the people to mock at the theory of reincarnation, which, by the way, is the first article of faith among nearly one quarter of the human race, and this not the most foolish quarter.

"How can that be—I ask for instruction, learned One—seeing that memory perishes with death?"

"Ah!" he answered, "Brother Holly, it may seem to do so, but oftentimes it comes back again, especially to those who are far advanced upon the Path. For instance, until you read this passage I had forgotten all about that army, but now I see it passing, passing, and myself with other monks standing by the statue of the big Buddha in front yonder, and watching it go by. It was not a very large army, for most of the soldiers had died, or been killed, and it was being pursued by the wild people who lived south of us in those days, so that it was in a great hurry to put the desert between it and them. The general of the army was a swarthy man —I wish that I could remember his name, but I cannot.

"Well," he went on, "that general came up to the Lamasery and demanded a sleeping-place for his wife and children, also provisions and medicines, and guides across the desert. The abbot of that day told him it was against our law to admit a woman under our roof, to which he answered that if we did not, we should have no roof left, for he would burn the place and kill every one of us with the sword. Now, as you know, to be killed by violence means that we must pass sundry incarnations in the forms of animals, a horrible thing, so we chose the lesser evil and gave way, and afterwards obtained absolution for our sins from the Great Lama. Myself I did not see this queen, but I saw the priestess of their worship—alas! alas!" and Kou-en beat his breast.

"Why alas?" I asked, as unconcernedly as I could, for this story interested me strangely.

"Why? Oh! because I may have forgotten the army, but I have never forgotten that priestess, and she has been a great hindrance to me through many ages, delaying me upon my journey to the Other Side, to the Shore of Salvation. I, as a humble Lama, was engaged in preparing her apartment when she entered and threw aside her veil; yes, and perceiving a young man, spoke to me, asking many questions, and even if I was not glad to look again upon a woman."

"What—what was she like?" said Leo anxiously.

"What was she like? Oh! she was all loveliness in one shape; she was like the dawn upon the snows; she was like the evening star above the mountains; she was like the first flower of the spring. Brother, ask me not what she was like—nay, I will say no more. Oh! my sin, my sin! I am slipping backward, and you draw my black shame out into the light of day. Nay, I will confess it, that you may know how vile a thing I am—I whom perhaps you have thought holy—like yourselves. That woman, if woman she were, lit a fire in my heart which will not burn out; oh! and more, more," and Kou-en rocked himself to and fro upon his stool, while tears of contrition trickled from beneath his horn spectacles, "*she made me worship her!* For first she asked me of my faith, and listened eagerly as I expounded it, hoping that the light would come into her heart; then, after I had finished she said—

"'So your Path is Renunciation and your

* As students of their lives and literature will be aware, it is common for Buddhist priests to state positively that they remember events which occurred during their previous incarnations.—Ed.

"Such was our introduction to the Monastery."

Nirvana a most excellent Nothingness which some would think it scarce worth while to strive so hard to reach. Now I will show you a more joyous way, and a goddess more worthy of your worship.'

"'What way, and what goddess?' I asked of her.

"'The way of Love and Life,' she answered, 'that makes all the world to be, that made *you*, O seeker of Nirvana, and the goddess called Nature.'

"Again I asked: 'Where is that goddess?' and, behold! she drew herself up, looking most royal, and, touching her ivory breast, she said: 'I am she. Now kneel you down and do me homage.'

"My brethren, I knelt, yes, I kissed her foot, and then I fled away ashamed and broken-hearted; and as I went she laughed, and cried: 'Remember me when you reach Devachan, O servant of the Buddha-saint, for though I change, I do not die, and even

there I shall be with you who once have given me worship.'

"And it is so, my brethren, it is so; for though I obtained absolution for my sin, and have suffered much for it through this, my next incarnation, yet I cannot be rid of her, and for me the Utter Peace is far, far away," and Kou-en placed his withered hands before his face and sobbed outright.

A ridiculous sight, truly, to see a holy Khubilghan, well on the wrong side of eighty, weeping like a child over a dream of a beautiful woman, which he imagined he had once dreamt in his last life more than two thousand years ago. So the reader will say. But I, Holly, for reasons of my own, felt deep sympathy with that poor old man, and Leo was also sympathetic. We patted him on the back; we assured him that he was the victim of some evil hallucination, which could never be brought up against him in this or any future existence, since, if sin there were, it must have been forgiven long ago, and so forth. When his calm was somewhat restored, we tried also to extract further information from him, but with poor results so far as the priestess was concerned.

He said that he did not know to what religion she belonged, and did not care, but thought that it must be an evil one. She went away the next morning with the army, and he never saw or heard of her any more, though it came into his mind that he was obliged to be locked in his cell for eight days to prevent himself from following her. Yes, he had heard one thing, for the abbot of that day had told the brethren. This priestess was the real general of the army, not the king or the queen, the latter of whom hated her. It was by her will that they pushed on northwards across the desert to some country beyond the mountains, where she desired to establish herself and her worship.

We asked if there really was any country beyond the mountains, and Kou-en answered wearily that he believed so. Either in this or in a previous life he had heard that people lived there who worshipped fire. Certainly, also, it was true that about thirty years ago a brother, who had climbed the great peak yonder to spend some days in solitary meditation, returned and reported that he had seen a marvellous thing—namely, a shaft of fire burning in the heavens beyond those same mountains, though whether this were a vision, or what, he could not say. He recalled, however, that about that time they had felt a great earthquake.

Then the memory of that fancied transgression again began to afflict Kou-en's innocent old heart, and he crept away lamenting and was seen no more for a week. Nor would he ever speak again to us of this matter.

But we spoke of it much with hope and wonder, and made up our minds that we would at once ascend this mountain.

(*To be continued.*)

THE POWER UNSLEEPING.

NO cloud along the blue may choose its way,
Nor where it listeth wildest wind may blow,
The proudest wave, the Voice shall bid it stay,
The yokèd star must in the furrow go.

Beckons before all things the taming Hand,
Behind them is the mandate of the Will;
They journey and they do not understand,
They are as we, here, toiling in the mill.

No thought has man he may declare ungiven,
No act that he can say, "It is of me";
From utmost deep unto the highest heaven,
Always the Power Unsleeping; none is free.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

SONGS AND SINGERS IN CARICATURE.

BY PERCY CROSS STANDING.

Illustrated from the famous series of drawings by Phil May, entitled "Songs and their Singers," which are reproduced from PUNCH *by permission of Sir Francis Burnand and of Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew and Co.*

"IS THERE ROOM FOR MARY THERE?

"THOSE burlesque pictures, which the Italians called *caricaturas*, where the art consists in preserving amidst distorted proportions and aggravated features some distinguishing likeness of the person, but in such a manner as to transform the most agreeable beauty into the most odious monster." This unflattering description of the art of the caricaturist is culled from the *Spectator* of the year 1712, but the word "caricature" does not occur in Johnson's Dictionary. From about the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, however, political and other caricaturing and lampooning gradually became general, while the Napoleonic wars produced an enormous crop of caricatures, clever and otherwise, having "Boney" for their central figure.

For a considerable period the caricaturing of musical subjects was almost entirely confined to comic and serio-comic themes. The song-caricature became the natural complement of the song-parody, and vocal efforts of the "How Happy Could I Be with Either" order generously lent themselves to the pencil of the cartoonist until well past the middle of the nineteenth century. But in an age when nothing whatever is sacred, it was not long ere the caricaturist was emboldened to seize upon the great majority of serious and sentimental ballads of a popular order, from "The Lost Chord" to "Bid Me Good-bye." Great vocalists, of the class of Sims Reeves and Santley, were not spared; while in the 'eighties, when all England was ringing with the melody of Tosti's "For Ever and for Ever," one of the brilliant cartoonists of *Vanity Fair* presented a lifelike caricature of the celebrated composer, identified by the title of that song.

"WE'LL ALL GO A-HUNTING TO-DAY!"

"THE GAY TOM-TIT."

"DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES!"

"THE HEART BOW'D DOWN."

"PUT ME IN MY LITTLE BED."

"WE SHALL KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER WHEN THE MISTS HAVE ROLLED AWAY."

A tribute to the popularity of Miss Florence Aylward's well-known "Beloved, it is Morn," is a witty cartoon wherein the young lady is made to complain to her mother that, although it is one o'clock in the morning, her admirer will not go. "Sing to him: 'Beloved, it is Morn,'" suggests her mother. The perennially popular "Violets" has, of course, been caricatured. Also, the illustrated papers of the day devoted some space, at the time, to Mr. James Blakeley's clever parody of "Violets" in the Coronet Theatre pantomime, beginning—

> Ev'ry morn I bring the washing
> Which by twilight I have boiled.

The publishers of this song, the Messrs. Ricordi, promptly sent down to the theatre and, whether wisely or otherwise, injuncted Mr. Blakeley from singing the parody. For the next night or two thereafter, it was very amusing to watch that excellent comedian enter as usual with his—or, rather, with "her"—basket of laundry-produce, and, with an agonised expression of countenance ("she" was the Widow Twankey, dear to the hearts of all children), make the bald announcement, in strictly conventional tones, that he had "brought the washing."

Witty Mr. Owen Seaman contributed to a former Christmas number of the *World* a particularly clever "skit" upon the lyrical efforts of Mr. Frederic E. Weatherly.

But in the realm of pictorial parody the late Phil May is by all odds the prince

"YEW HARXED ME WOY HOI LARVED WHEN LARVE SHOULD BE A THING HUN-DER-EAMED HOF, LARVE TWIXT YEW HAN ME!"

of these song-caricaturists. The wholesome, irresistible fun of the inimitable series of "Songs and their Singers," which he contributed to *Punch*, renders it for ever memorable even in the memorable annals of that journal. Where all the work is so delightful it would be invidious to particularise. Still, there is something especially appealing about the one that deals with Miss M. V. White's famous song, "The Devout Lover." You tremble and turn pale as you think of the figure there depicted commencing to warble (?): "It is not mine to sing the stately grace." Or take the representation of the street-singer trolling forth the air of "You Ask Me Why

"ONLY THIS!"

"MY MOTHER BIDS ME BIND MY HAIR."

"THE DEVOUT LOVER."

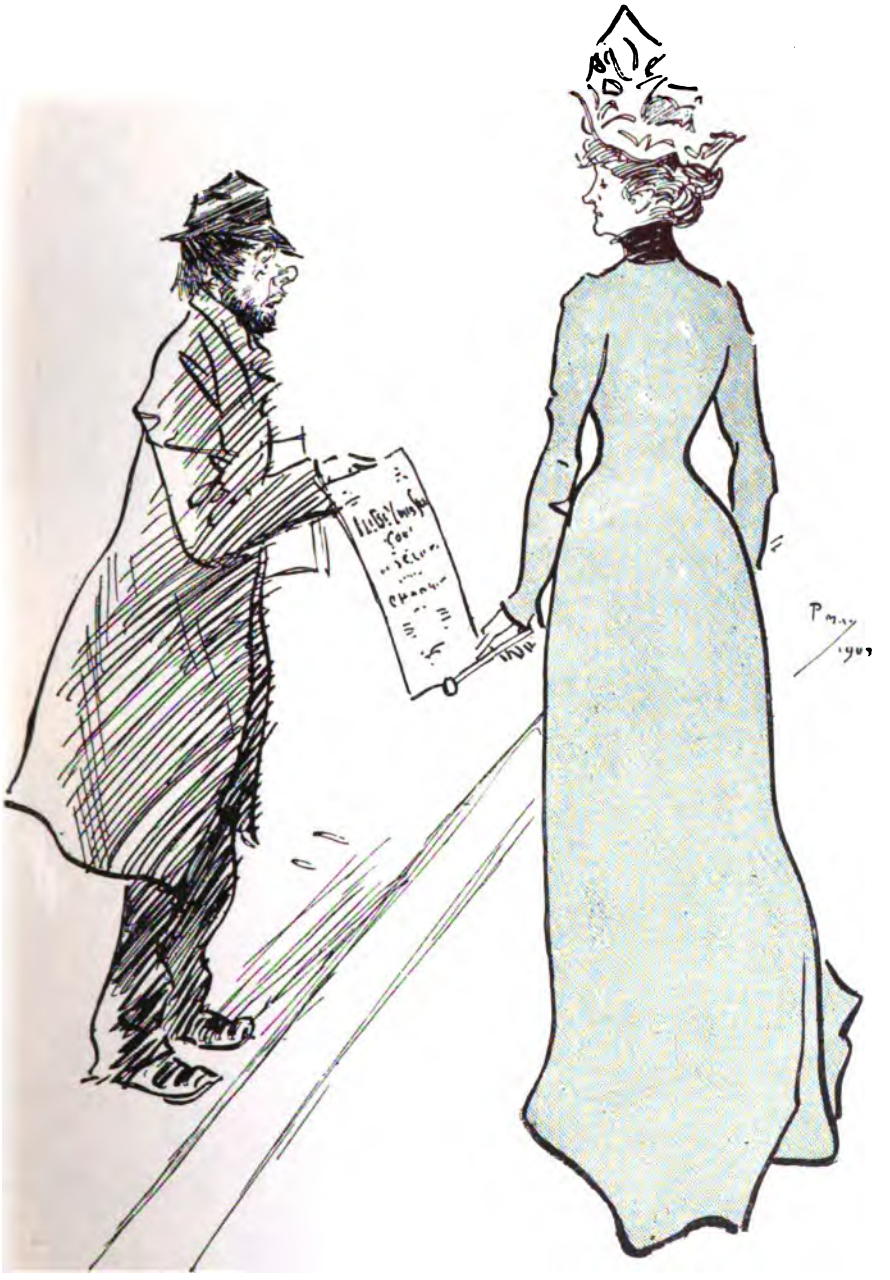
"THE WARRIOR BOLD."

"THERE'S ONLY ONE GIRL IN THE WORLD FOR ME."

"'TIS HARD TO GIVE THE HAND WHERE THE HEART CAN NEVER BE."

"BEAUTY'S EYES."

"TO BLOSSOMS."



"'ERE YER ARE, LIDY; 'I'LL BE YER SWEET-'ART.'"

I Love," on the kerb outside the gin-palace, with Mr. Phil May's accompanying version of the letterpress :—

Yew harxed me woy hoi larved when larve should be
A thing hun-der-eamed hof, larve twixt Yew han Me.
Yew moight hin-tereat the Sun ter cease ter she-oine
Has seek tew sty saw deep a larve has Moine.

This series, indeed, shows Phil May at his best, and makes us realise with a pang all that we have lost in him. "'Tis Hard to Give the Hand where the Heart Can Never Be" exhibits the artist in a rich imaginative vein. "To Blossoms," again, explains itself at once, and perhaps finds its most suitable companion in the expressive cartoon of the lady singing "Is there Room for Mary

There?" Inimitable, too, is the "Only This," delicious in treatment, and in the infinite life that Mr. May knew so well how to give to every line. "The Warrior Bold" and "The Storm Fiend" are cartoons calculated to appeal to a wide audience. Mr. May touched a considerably older theme in treating of the carol-singers serenading, or rather bombarding, the irascible old gentleman in the dead of night. But he touched it as only he could.

It is not generally known that Phil May had a genuine love of and taste for music inborn in him. This doubtless accounts for much of the real inspiration contained in his Caricatures of Song.

"I'D BE A BUTTERFLY."

It was commonly rumoured at the time that Mr. *Punch's* droll caricature, "*Meat* Me Once Again" (calling to mind Mr. Dan Leno's "But Where's the *Meat?*" of later date), did a considerable amount of damage to that most popular of sentimental ballads. But "Once Again" sold hundreds of thousands of copies, and it is very much open to question whether the "caricature of song" does any harm whatsoever to the ditty caricatured.

"THE STORM FIEND."

"OH, REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN, LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY!"

THE GRATITUDE OF JOHNNY GEE.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.*

YOU might have seen them two semi-detached cottages at the corner of Belstone Green as you come into the village from the west? There I lived as a bachelor-man for ten year; an' 'twas there that I had such a bitter fall-out wi' my next-door neighbour — all along o' the queer wickedness of the boy, Johnny Gee. My sister's son he was, an' if ever I seed a youngster that you might say would do great things—an' probably bad ones—sooner or late, 'twas John.

As a young man I had a good many opinions—more by a long sight than I've got now that I be over seventy, I can assure 'e; for them as get wiser with age, as we all should, sometimes shed their opinions, like a snake do slough his skin. There's nought takes the place of an open mind. I knowed an old doctor who told me that in his young days he had twenty physics for every ill; an' now he'm up threescore year an' ten, he've got one physic for twenty ills. An', what's more, he don't use that one till he've given Nature a fair chance to do her own work single-handed.

But my neighbour, George Arscott by name, was different altogether. I never in all my born days knowed a narrower-minded chap — to say it without unkindness. A reg'lar neck-or-nothing Tory, as wouldn't allow any living soul liberty but himself, an' hated the progress of the world, an' hated steam, an' swore something shocking at the labour-saving machinery as comed over from America. In our earliest days I mind how George Arscott made such a douce of a fuss at a meeting about the Reform Bill that he was chucked out of the parish room for being impertinent to the gentleman in the chair. Yet to-day, if you told George that he wasn't to vote for his member of Parliament, he'd be the first to make a noise, I'm sure. I was always hot for liberty myself, an' progress, an' free trade, an' free everything but free fighting.

The talks we used to have over the back fence of an evening! We set the world right, I promise you. For he was a bachelor, too, an' a very prosperous, honest, busy man—well thought upon by the vicar an' the gentry in general. He really did ought to have been a gentleman hisself, for he had all the ideas of 'em, an' thought it was a right an' proper thing for 'em to live for hunting foxes an' never do no work, except when they rode out now an' again in dazzling an' glittering garments with the Yeomanry. To hear George upon the rights of property, you'd have thought the man owned Devonshire an' a bit of Cornwall too. But what he really did have was a little freehold cottage up the hill, an' twenty yards of garden along with it. This he rented to his own grandfather for five shilling a week; though 'twas a rattle-bones of a place — not worth three shilling in my judgment. But George—why he was a reg'lar lord of the manor when he talked about his house an' land, an' his rent coming in an' so on.

Once I axed him, over the back fence, why for he didn't appoint a common man to collect his rents for him an' look after his tenants an' so on; but George, to be just, never seed a joke in all his life, an' when I make one in his company, I always have to do the laughing myself.

Different though we was in our outlook upon the world, we agreed here an' there. We was both church-goers, both small drinkers, an' both kept poultry. Bantams were his special line, an' so they was mine. He was portreeve of Belstone, an' a Dartmoor guide, when anybody wanted to go up over, an' a very clever stonemason; an' I was postman, an' people's churchwarden, an' a few other odd things—all with a little small money to 'em.

We looked after ourselves in them days, for though I was courting, only me an' Minnie Bloom knowed it. Her people had other ideas an' wanted for her to take a linendraper at Okehampton—a good man, but weak in the chest an' wi' shoulders that wouldn't hold up his coat. As for George, he hadn't no use for women—nor they for him.

Life ran on regular lines, as it mostly do with sober, thrifty folks to Belstone, an' if it hadn't been for our ideas an' arguments, it might have growed a thought dull for George

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"The talks we used to have over the back fence of an evening!"

an' me. But we was like flint and steel—always struck a spark when we met; an' none the worse friends. In fact, it sweetened our minds to differ on everything, an' kept our intellects from growing rusty.

About the way to handle bantams we was very nearly agreed, an' our friendly fighting extended to the birds, you may be sure. The tussles us used to have at all the poultry shows for ten mile round! Now he'd win, an' now I would; but in the bantey class 'twas nearly always him or me—excepting the time when I thought he was bound to win at Tavistock show, an' he thought I was bound to win, an' be blessed if another chap from Launceston, as nobody had ever heard of, didn't beat us both! But 'twas an accident an' a very mistaken judgment, as all agreed except the chap from Launceston; for, without self-praise, me an' Arscott was by far the cleverest bantam-fanciers in mid-Devon in the 'fifties.

At the time of the coming of Johnny Gee I'd won the Okehampton cup twice, an' only had to win the thing once more for to make it my own property. But Arscott had got a pair of right-down beauties that year, an' though mine was nearly as good, I felt he'd just beat me on points. White as snow his was, wi' combs so red as a rose, an' such a style an' strut an' conceit about 'em—a lady an' gentleman that pair. They weighed two pound three ounces on the scale together, an' looked at you that haughty, you was most

minded to touch your hat to 'em. An' mine was spangled an' only an ounce heavier. They'd crow against each other from the first glimmer of cock-light; an' I make no doubt if them two game little beauties had met, they'd have fought to the death an' made pretty sport an' a noble end.

He reckoned to beat me in autumn; an' I knowed 'twas likely enough, but still my birds was coming on beautiful from day to day, an' I hadn't gived up all hope.

II.

ONE morning in late April I seed Arscott in his garden, an' went out to him with a letter what I'd got from my sister, Sarah Gee.

He looked up from the ground where his eyes were watching his bantams.

"Marnin', Matthew," he said. "You'll have to hand over that cup come September," he said, "for I be going to win it. These here be the bestest birds ever I reared, an' you know that so well as I do."

"Not a doubt about it, George," I answered him; "an' so long as you beats me, 'tis all right, but I don't want none else to."

Then I told him about the letter.

"'Tis from my widowed sister, Sarah Gee, to Drewsteignton. She'm not very well-to-do, an' her eldest, Johnny, is turning her hair grey, by all accounts—as they will often enough if the father's took afore his time. There's no doubt that he's a rash youth an' terrible self-willed; but all the same, no boy as had my sister Sarah to his mother can be all bad. She have written axin' me to take him for a month, an' try an' lick sense into him, an' get him a job somewheres to keep him out of mischief."

"Don't you do it, Matthew," said Arscott to me very serious. "Us don't want no boys messing about here—quite enough in Belstone an' to spare as it is. A boy's a beastly thing at his best, an' at his worse a limb of the Dowl. An' this here boy, by his mother's own showing, be the sort as oughtn't to be born at all. An' if she says so, you may easily guess what other people would say."

But Arscott always was very much against the young. He took childer for his natural enemies, an' he reckoned the breeding of 'em to be a fool's game at all times.

"A nephew's a nephew, however," I said; "an' seeing as the boy haven't any mankind at Drewsteignton to larn him his duty, I'm afraid I must see to him."

"You'll go your own way, of course," says George. "For that matter, who ever heard of your doing otherwise? But you'm wrong, an' you'll terrible soon find out you'm wrong. 'Tis a very dangerous thing to meddle with a fatherless boy. You think you be going to please his mother, but you're not; an' the juster you are with him, the less she'll thank you. He's spoilt for good an' all, I'll wager. Nought will save him now."

"Well, 'tis on my conscience that I ought to have a shot at him; an' I'm going to do it," I answered; "an' if you an' me can't larn a boy of fourteen some sense in a month, 'tis pity."

"Don't you drag me in!" cries out Arscott. "I won't make a meddle with him; an' you mind he don't meddle with me. I don't want him my side of the fence, an' he'll know it very quick if I find him here. Since you'm vain enough to think you can break him in—a simple bachelor like you—try it; but for my part, I'd sooner tame a tiger or teach a bullock to dance than have aught to do with a human boy."

So we left it on that clear understanding an' talked about the banteys; an' that evening I wrote to Sarah an' told her as I'd try my hand at the lad if she'd send him over that day week.

III.

WELL, the boy comed along, wi' a clean shirt an' a Sunday suit, an' a tooth-brush an' collars, an' three pairs of socks in a little box, as all spoke of the goodness of my sister Sarah. But certainly she had said no more than the truth when she called him a headstrong lad. I never seed no boy quite like him. He'd been born without a conscience seemingly, same as some poor folks are born deaf or dumb or without a leg; or like they Sebright banteys, as haven't no male plumage to 'em.

He might have been a Red Indian's child, an' didn't show no more idea of right an' wrong than a wild cat. An' as for his duty to his neighbour, 'twas right down news to him to hear about it. A brown-faced, bullet-headed boy, with hair like sealskin, an' eyes like black diamonds, as would look at you so swift as a flash of lightning, then look away again. A rather thin sort of a boy, wi' nervous, birdlike ways—now here, now there—an' quick hands always in mischief. A terrible self-possessed fashion of a boy, as never got into a temper, but had a 'mazing way of getting other people into 'em. His wish was to go to sea or be a gamekeeper; but there was a lot afore him to larn yet before he could shine in such orderly callings as them.

Johnny assured me he liked me very well afore he'd been in the house a day; an' Arscott thought that was a bad sign. But I hardened my heart against his wicked brown face an' told him straight that he'd come to me to larn his duty, an' not to amuse himself an' make holiday.

He fought two Belstone boys the second day he comed; an' one he licked; an' t'other licked him; an' then he got another licking on top, for the mother of the boy he'd thrashed just catched him coming home an' dropped on him hot an' strong. He returned to me whistling, with a bloody nose. He was perfectly well satisfied with his day's work an' his new company. An' two nights after he laid wait in the hedge for the boy as had beat him, an' throwed a rope with a noose in it over the chap's head, an' dragged him twenty yards through a pigs' run afore the blessed boy knowed what had overtaken him.

Luckily it wasn't the fruit season, else I make no doubt John would have been catched an' put to prison once and for all. But the bird-nesting season it was, an' he never 'peared to care about no nests unless he found 'em in private grounds, or the game preserves, or other people's gardens.

He comed to me in a grand rage once, an' his eyes flashed under his black eyebrows.

"I've found a heckanoddy's * nest in old Arscott's wall," he said. "'Tis a certainty, for I seed the bird pop in; an' I've gone an' spoke to the man so civil as need be, an' axed to be allowed to drag a few stones off the top and pull a bit down; an' the long-faced old devil told me to get out of his sight, or he'd fetch me a whister-poop on the ear-hole. That's what you get by being civil to people."

"Of course he won't let you pull his wall down. Why should he? You be a deal too busy after the birds' nests," I said.

"I likes to blow the eggs an' make 'em into necklaces for the girls," he tells me, grinning all over his face, like a wicked young shaver as he was.

"You'd best to leave the girls alone," I says. "An', what's more, I've got work for you from Monday next, for Farmer Westaway, up on Watchett Down, be going to give you a job frighting rooks at sixpence a day."

But I wasn't very hopeful about this, for the boy seemed a lot too pleased at the news; an', sure enough, he hadn't been gone more'n about two hour on the first morning, when Squire Luscombe's keeper brought him back by the ear. I gived the man half-a-crown to let un off, since he'd done no greater wrong than trespassing; an' then I got the boy a job down at a wheelwright's yard in Sticklepath village, where there was men to watch him. But after a week of it, Ned Foster, the master, an' a terrible strict Wesleyan, catched Johnny kissing his ten-year old darter in the dinner-hour; an' Johnny was home along to me presently—sore here an' there, but perfectly cheerful an' collected about it.

"They don't want me to Mr. Foster's no more," he said. "I promised Nelly Foster to marry her some day, if she'd let me kiss her now an' again in sight of some other boys down there. An' she did; an' her faither catched me."

Alive! I never did see such a live boy. Tingling with life, as you might say. An' all his dreadful, unsleeping energy poured out the wrong way. I axed un why for he didn't try to do right, an' he said he'd no objection in the world to doing right; but he couldn't see that the things he done was wrong, an' it always puzzled him cruel that nobody never saw things in general from his point of view. He was terrible obliged to me for trying to larn him sense, an' the matters he liked to know about, such as banteys, he could grasp in no time; but when it came to duty an' behaviour an' obedience to your betters, I might just as soon have tried to teach a haystack to sing.

Mind you, I liked the boy through it all, for he never played me no tricks; but I soon knowed as he wouldn't be along with me a month, for him an' Arscott fought from the day he comed, an' I never see one human loathe another like George got to loathe Johnny. He turned white when he catched sight of the boy up the street, an' everything that went wrong 'twas my nephy done it. Then comed a day when John cheeked Arscott afore my face, an' I had to take a serious view of it an' lift my hand. 'Twas in the garden, an' the boy was setting on the fence cutting an' chopping the palings for no reason but to try if his knife was sharp.

Arscott seed him an' come to his back door.

"You get off there, you hateful toad!" he says. "Next thing you'll do, you'll bring down the whole rails an' fall on top of my young lettuces."

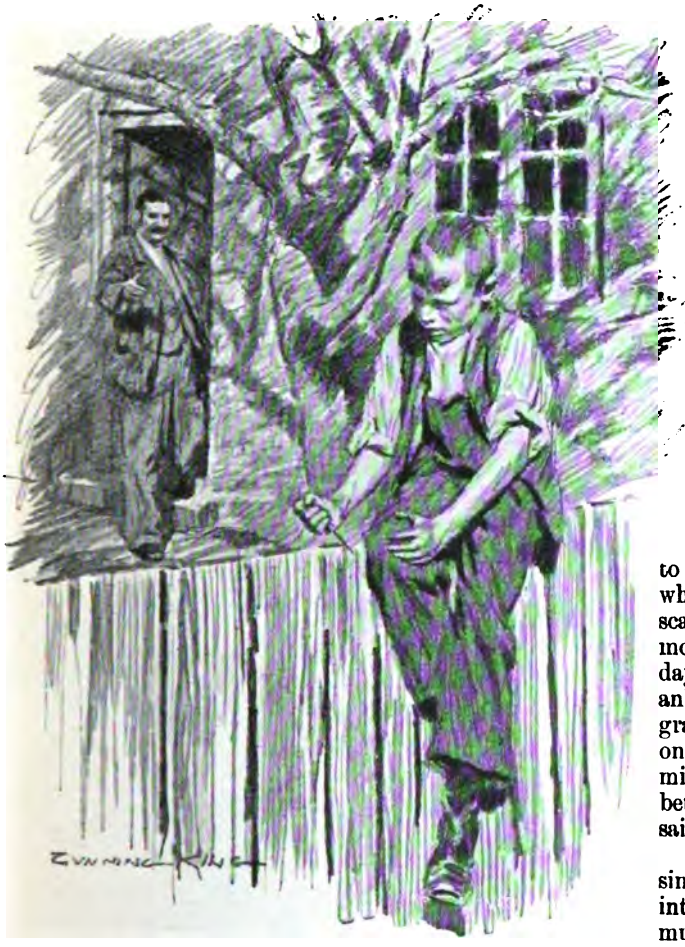
"I'm my own side of the fence," says Johnny; "an' I've got every right to sit here; an' be hanged to your young lettuces!

*Heckanoddy = tomtit.

an' if I'd got a pair of whiskers like yours, I'd go an' throw myself in the river."

Well, there stood Arscott, an' there stood I; an' Arscott said never a word, but looked at me, as much as to say: "What be you going to do about that, neighbour?"

So I takes an ash sapling to Master John



"'You get off there, you hateful toad!' he says."

an' gives him the properest hiding that ever a strong man in a temper gived to a bad boy. I kept at it till he hollered out, though he set his teeth an' suffered a rare dose till his nature wouldn't bear no more. An' Arscott cheered up, like the sun coming from behind a cloud, an' encouraged me over the wall till me an' Johnny had both got enough of it.

"There," I said when I'd fetched my wind. "There, you bad-hearted, useless, saucy scoundrel, that'll teach 'e to call your betters names. An' if I hear any more against you, I'll do it again—ten times a day I'll do it; for you'm a good-for-nought that us can't reach through the heart, so we must get at him through the hide. Now you march up to your chamber, an' go to bed, an' stop there till I come to 'e."

He went off very thoughtful like, an' Arscott lifted up his voice an' praised me.

"You've done me good," he said. "I haven't felt so cheerful since that little wasp comed here. An' if the boy's soul is to be saved—though, for my part, I don't believe it possible—he've got to be lathered like that every day for his life—Sundays an' all. Don't you spare him, Matthew Sweetland," he says, "but remember that every howl he howls now may save him an' other people a groan come he grows up."

That night I took the boy a drink of water an' a lump of bread. An' he thanked me, an', to my surprise, listened to me talking very patiently while he ate an' drank. I gave it to him all I knew, an' told him what a right down wicked young scamp he was; an' said as how his mother was weeping for him by day an' praying for him by night, an' explained that he was a disgrace to the name of boy, an' so on. All of which he took very mildly an' thoughtfully, an' nodded between my remarks. Then he said—

"I've never been beat like that since faither died; an' 'tis a most interesting thing to feel how much it can hurt. I wish I was a man, then I'd go in next door an' give that old hedgehog Arscott what for till he yowled an' danced."

"You'll go in next door an' beg his pardon to-morrow—that's what you'll do," I said. "I've been a lot too easy with you; but no more. 'Twill be a word an' a blow after to-day."

"You'll kill me afore I ever axes pardon of that man," he says. "He did ought to ax my pardon. But he'm one of the sort that must always have something littler than himself to bully. He ain't going to bully me, though. 'Tis him, not you, I've got to

thank for that thrashing. An' I will—an' pay him for it, too."

"We'll see," I said. "If a man like me can't manage a bit of a boy, 'tis rather surprising. Your mother have sent you to me to mend your ways, an' mend 'em I mean to, though I may have to break your skin doing it. I'm a tolerable strong man, an' tolerable sensible, an' I've set myself to save your soul while there's time—so that's how we stand."

"I don't think 'twill be quite good enough to bide with you, then," he answered me, so calm as you please.

"Bide you will, however," I told him. "I'm your lawful guardian an' keeper by your mother's express orders. So the sooner you cave in an' try to be a good boy, the better for you an' all parties."

"I reckon Belstone ban't going to suit me," he said with his cool, maddening voice.

"Ah! no place where there's honest, God-fearing people will ever suit you," I answered. "You'll have to go over seas to the lands of the heathen savages afore you'll find your sort."

"'Tis the very thing I want to do, Uncle Mat," he says, smiling. "I wants to find a land where you can do just what's in you to do, without making a lot of silly trouble."

"There ban't no room in this world for that land, my son," I said. "Now you go to sleep; I've had enough of you for one day. Go to sleep, an' say your prayers, an' ax God as made you to make you over again an' put a conscience into you. Us must all be born again, for that matter," I said. "An' 'tis more'n time you was."

"Good night, an' I hope as you'll have a better supper than what I have," he answers, cheeky to the end. An' that was the last time as I clapped eyes on Johnny Gee or heard his voice for nearly twenty years.

IV.

COME morning I went up to him, finding he hadn't gone down to light the fire, which I always made him do from the day he came. But his bed was empty, and there was no mark of him about except a few clothes wi' holes in 'em. He'd put on his best suit an' gone off in it. Of course, I judged he'd run home to his mother, an' I felt that, though he'd bested me—in a manner of speaking—yet I should get along without him wonderful easy. But presently I found that I was wrong, for, going down in the kitchen again, I marked something in the window, alongside a geranium or two that grow in pots there. What I seed was a grubby sort of a letter—inky an' dirty, an' addressed to me—an' a newspaper parcel very neatly done up. I never knowed the boy could write, but he could; an' though his spelling was a thought uncommon, his meanin' couldn't have been made clearer by the best penman in the world. This here's what he said:—

"MY DERE UNCLE MAT,—

I don't think I'll bide along with you no more becos now you no me you be going to be to sharp. I am going to sea to-morrow and if the ship fetches up agenst any of them lands you tell of where there's savvages that all do what they plese I shall run away from the ship and stop along with them becos theer way of life wood suit me very nice. And I am very much obleeged to you, tho you think I am no good an' some day I'll take the libberty of showing you I am some good. I have just gone out in the black dark and broken into that Arscott's hen-roast and what I done there you will find in the parcal. I done it out of shere gratitod to you becos I no well you ment the right thing by me. And now you must win that cup with your bantey and that old fiddel-faced fool next dor can just tare his jinjer wiskers and some day I'll take good care he nose what I have done. He is a lopp-sided old scarecrow and I am always your grateful nevew John Gee. I am sorry for the bantey but I could not take it with me to sea and my box might go back to mother."

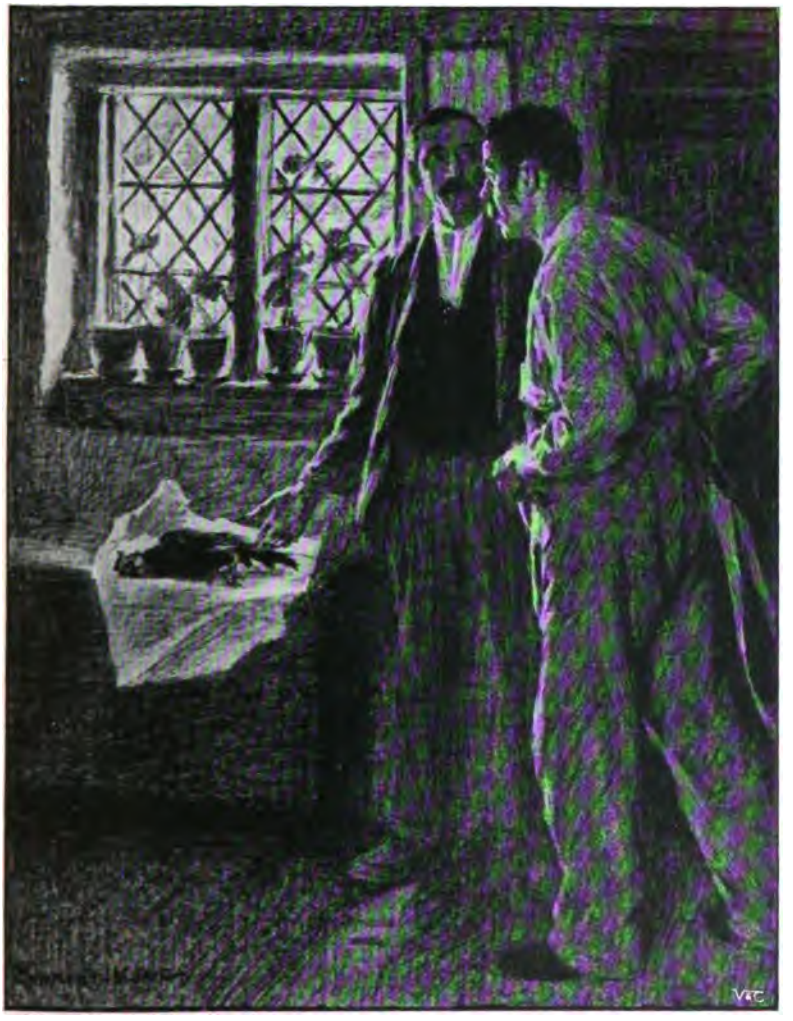
There was the letter, and you'll guess what I found in the parcel—George Arscott's cock bantam, with his neck wrung!

There I stood—just staring helpless like at the poor little fowl, as didn't look bigger than a storm-thrush now he was dead, an' thinking in a curious sort of way what a come-down it was for the bird, from being cocksure of first prize at Okehampton an' a sort of king o' banteys, to fall into the hand of this vagabond boy an' get twirled out of life in a twinkling. Then, afore I'd thought what to do about it, I heard a noise in the back garden as if a bullock had got in an' couldn't get out again; an' there was George Arscott in red felt slippers, wi' his braces an' his whiskers flying, an' his face like a chapter out of the Lamentations. He climbed over my fence, an' walked right across some young peas, an' comed in to me.

"Matthew Sweetland," he said, wi' a queer voice as seemed to come more out of his stomach than his throat, "my fowl-house

was broken ope last night an' my cock bantey's stolen."

"There he is, George," I said, an' pointed to the table, where his bird lay 'pon its back, wi' its little silvery feet drawed up, an' its eyes shut, an' its neck awry. 'Twas a tragical moment for all of us, I can assure 'e. George he glazed upon it; then he picked it up; then he dropped it on the floor, an' turned upon me, screaming like a woman.



"'There he is, George,' I said, an' pointed to the table, where the bird lay 'pon its back."

"I'll get you put in clink for this, if it costs me the flesh off my bones!" he said.

"No, George, you won't," I answered him. "An' 'tis idle to blare in your wrath like this, for I'm innocent as the unborn, an' you ought to know me well enough to know it. This solemn thing ban't naught to do with me. An' I'd have sat up every night for a week to watch your fowls rather than let such a terrible masterpiece of wickedness be done against them. Read that letter; or I'll read it out to 'e, since you ban't in a frame of mind to solve penmanship."

But he wouldn't wait and wouldn't listen.

"Never again you lift your voice to me," he said, "You'm a robber an' a murderer both, an' if there's justice to be got for money, I'll get it against you afore I'm a day older. You'm a cruel, blackguardly villain an' no better; an' if I could wring your neck for you, I would. But I'll never sleep till you'm punished, an' I hope the law's strong enough to make you smart for this to your dying day. An' if it ban't—then I'll take the law into my own hands. You mark my words."

With this big an' silly talk the poor soul picked up his bantey an' marched off. An', sure enough, two days later I got a law summons from the Queen, an' was told to appear afore the justices to Okehampton Court. Which I did do at the appointed time; an' there was Arscott in his Sunday black, an' a lawyer to state his case for him, an' half Belstone to see what the upshot would be. But I didn't take no lawyer along wi' me. I just relied upon Johnny's letter an' my known character as an upright man an' a plain dealer.

Well, I read the letter, an' the justices was very much interested in it. I told 'em

all that went afore it, too, an' their Honours axed poor George if I telled truth, an' he couldn't do less than admit that I did in every particklar. And the Bench believed the truth, which is more than they always do; so there was an end of the business till they found Johnny Gee.

All the policemen was told to find him, an' a good hue an' cry they made, but none could trace him beyond Plymouth. An' it looked clear enough he'd gone to sea; an' Arscott's word came true about my sister Sarah, for she stepped over to give me her opinions; an' I never want to spend another afternoon wi' a woman who's lost sight of her firstborn an' thinks 'tis my fault.

It wasn't till she got a letter from Johnny herself that she forgived me. Then she axed me over to see her on a Sunday, and I went an' heard what had happened. The letter he sent had come from H.M.S. *Impregnable*, the old three-decker down to Plymouth harbour, where they bring up boys for the Navy; an' there was that precious youth larning to be a sailor! He'd got mixed up seemingly between the merchant service an' the Royal Navy, an' somebody had put him on the right road, though afore he'd been aboard four-an'-twenty hours, he'd have gived his soul to be ashore again. Because the wonderful ways of a boatswain's mate comed to him liked the Voice come to Paul in the wilderness, an' he began to see a side of the world as was quite new to him. Having catched him, the Navy wouldn't let him go again, very properly, an' as he'd given hisself a new name, so as not to be traced in Plymouth, nobody ever thought he was the boy Johnny Gee, that was wanted to Okehampton. Me an' his mother bided quiet about it, too, for I felt it wasn't no good saying anything with George Arscott still raging round like a lion against him. 'Twould have been a gert pity to put him in prison an' perhaps ruin his life—so it looked to me. An' Johnny actually made a very good sailor, too, an' got his stripes regular, an' rose in the service, an becomed a credit to himself an' his own; for there's surely no place like a battleship for putting the fear of God into a boy.

And I may add that Arscott an' me made it up in a fashion next autumn. That was because I didn't show my banteys, after all. Of course, 'twas impossible for me to do it, things being as they were. An' he won with another pair that I could have beat easy, but none else in them parts.

Then I think he seed that I was innocent of a thought against him, an' forgived me in his surly way, an' passed the time of day, an' cussed the weather in his usual friendly fashion when us met. But we never had none of the old arguments over the back fence, an' as years went on I think he comed more to think about life, as I did myself. For once I catched him saying a rude thing about Squire Luscombe's son, as had got into trouble with the money-lenders; an' once he declared to a neighbour that the law was no better than it ought to be, an' not so good in some particulars—meaning, of course, the case he'd lost against me.

George never married; an' when my Minnie's mother died, an' the hopes of the linendraper were done with—owing to him going into a decline and passing away like a leaf off a tree, poor young fellow—I had her, an' never man had a better. An' George sent me a book of sermons for a wedding present. He got more and more along with the Bible Christians as he growed older. The sermons was not very cheerful as to a man's chances hereafter, but they done me good now an' again, when I had leisure to dip in; because I've been one of them who, somehow, always got a deal more than his share of God's blessings; an' 'twas a wholesome thing to see t'other side of the picture an' read what was being carefully hatched in Eternity for the backsliders.

The Beggar-Man

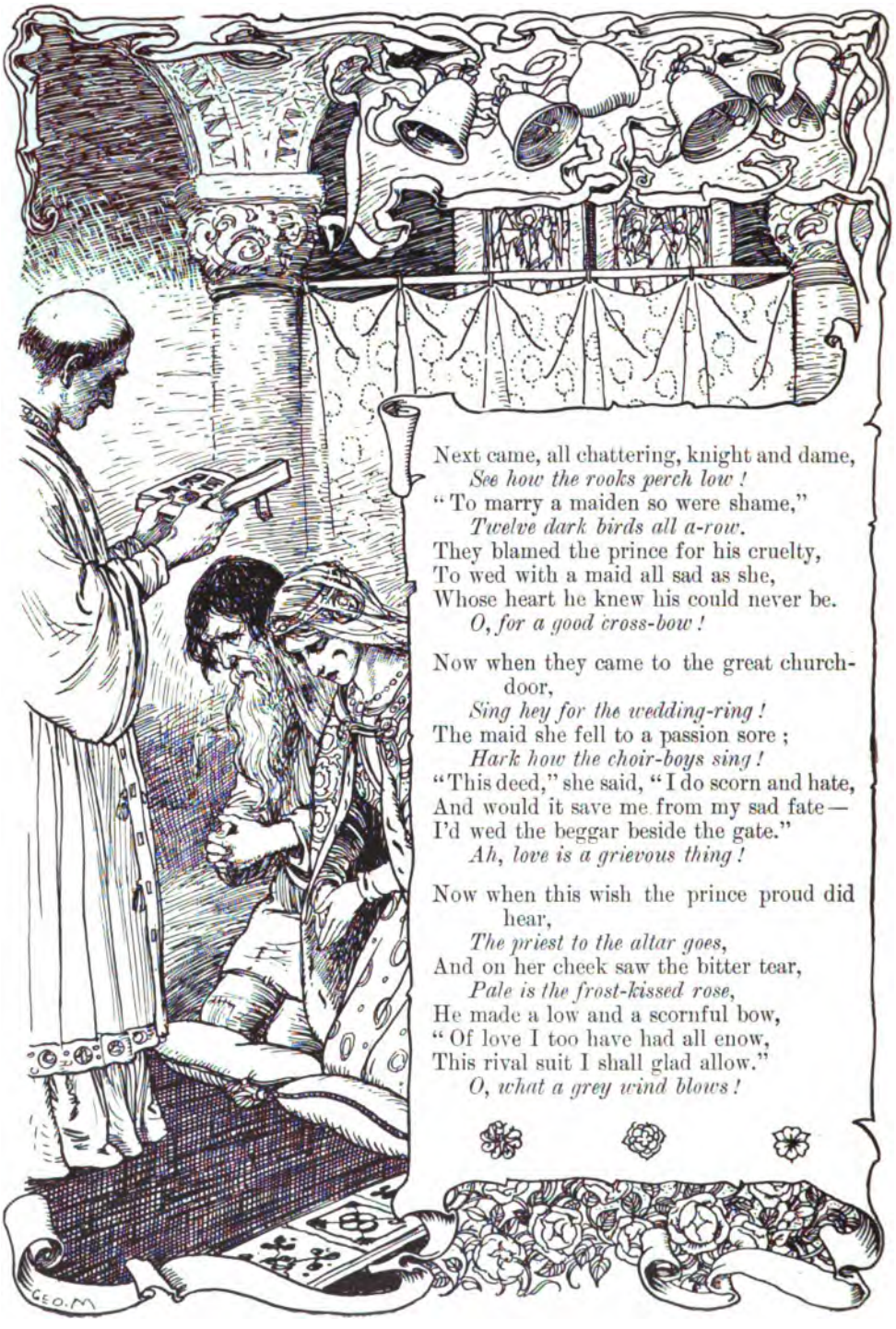
By Dora Sigerson Shorter

A BEGGAR sat by the King's highway,
O, but the road was long!
His hair was black and his beard was grey.
Hark to the linnet's song!
He sat him down by the churchyard gate,
He beat his breast and bemoaned his fate.
There passed the King in his royal state.
Gay ride the merry throng.

There rode the King with his golden crown.
A hawk in the far blue sky,
His haughty queen in her silken gown.
O, bleats a lamb close by?
Then came full slow on her palfrey white
The princess, pale as the March moonlight,
And woeful it was to watch her plight.
Hark to the lost lamb's cry!

Then passed the prince of a far-off land,
What can you buy for gold?
Who came for his claim on the maid's small hand.
A lamb that has lost its fold.
His eyes were chill as the snow-set thorn,
And he rode all grim on his marriage morn,
He scowled at the maid who his suit did scorn.
O, but the wind blows cold!

By went the page in his coat of brown,
Gay was the song he sung.
He knocked the beggar's old oak staff down;
O, but the world was young!
His laugh was rude as he danced away,
He mocked and jeered in his foolish play,
But never a word did the old man say.
Hark, have the church bells rung?



Next came, all chattering, knight and dame,
See how the rooks perch low!
"To marry a maiden so were shame,"
Twelve dark birds all a-row.
They blamed the prince for his cruelty,
To wed with a maid all sad as she,
Whose heart he knew his could never be.
O, for a good cross-bow!

Now when they came to the great church-door,
Sing hey for the wedding-ring!
The maid she fell to a passion sore;
Hark how the choir-boys sing!
"This deed," she said, "I do scorn and hate,
And would it save me from my sad fate—
I'd wed the beggar beside the gate."
Ah, love is a grievous thing!

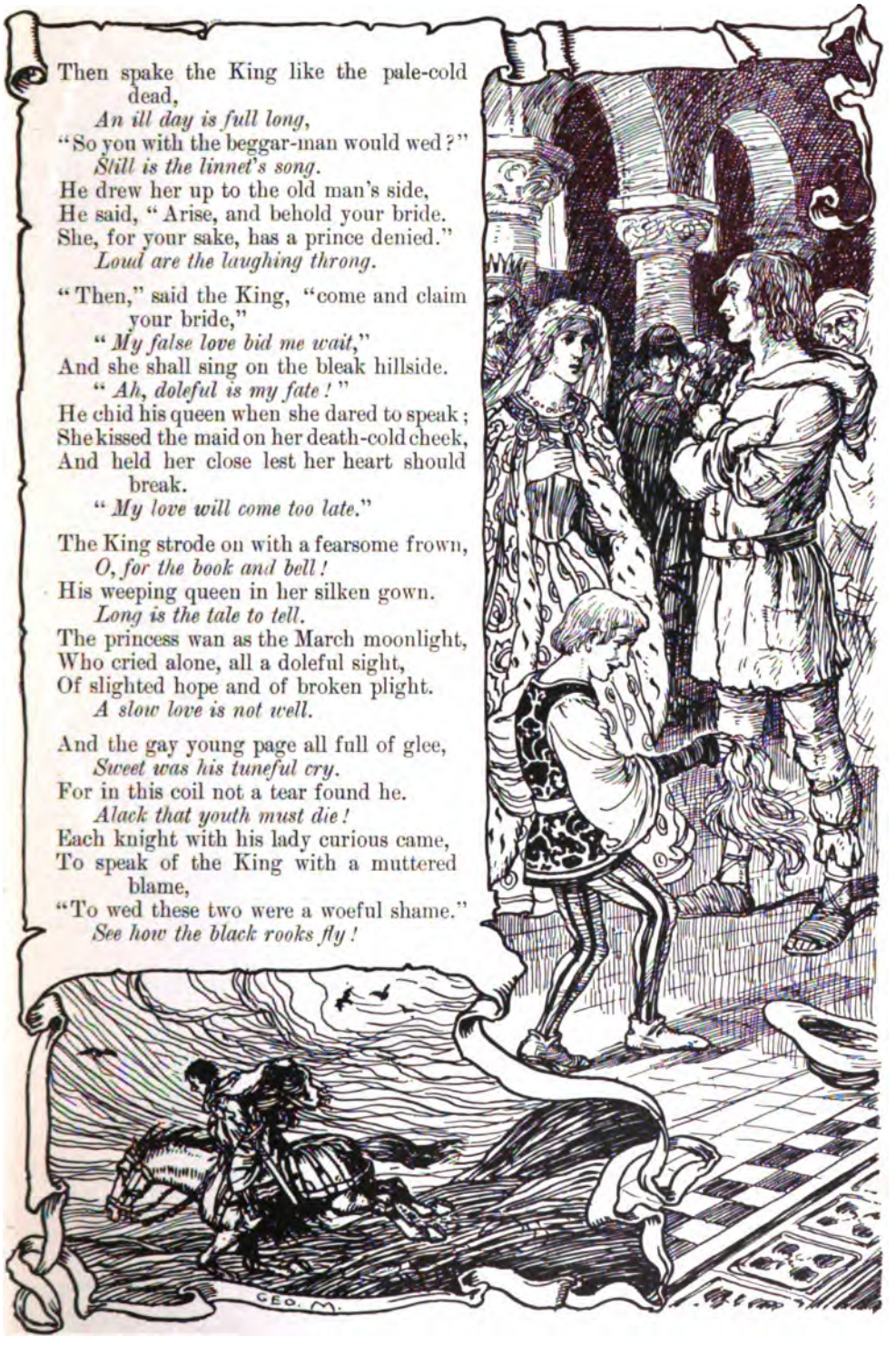
Now when this wish the prince proud did hear,
The priest to the altar goes,
And on her cheek saw the bitter tear,
Pale is the frost-kissed rose,
He made a low and a scornful bow,
"Of love I too have had all enow,
This rival suit I shall glad allow."
O, what a grey wind blows!

Then spake the King like the pale-cold dead,
An ill day is full long,
"So you with the beggar-man would wed?"
Still is the linnet's song.
He drew her up to the old man's side,
He said, "Arise, and behold your bride.
She, for your sake, has a prince denied."
Loud are the laughing throng.

"Then," said the King, "come and claim your bride,"
"*My false love bid me wait,*"
And she shall sing on the bleak hillside.
"*Ah, doleful is my fate!*"
He chid his queen when she dared to speak;
She kissed the maid on her death-cold cheek,
And held her close lest her heart should break.
"*My love will come too late.*"

The King strode on with a fearsome frown,
O, for the book and bell!
His weeping queen in her silken gown.
Long is the tale to tell.
The princess wan as the March moonlight,
Who cried alone, all a doleful sight,
Of slighted hope and of broken plight.
A slow love is not well.

And the gay young page all full of glee,
Sweet was his tuneful cry.
For in this coil not a tear found he.
Alack that youth must die!
Each knight with his lady curious came,
To speak of the King with a muttered blame,
"To wed these two were a woeful shame."
See how the black rooks fly!



Then the priest did bless the marriage-ring,
"Long shall I live to rue,"
And the wedding-bells all high did swing.
"Go, for I love not you!"
But the bride she bowed her golden head,
And she sighed, "O would that I were dead,
Since my false love I may never wed!"
Ah, that her love were true!

The tears flowed quick from her drooping eyes,
O, but her cheeks were pale!

And she gave her gentle breast to sighs.
Low did she weep and wail.
"When my haughty sire your suit denied
You swore you would make me still your bride,
All brave you stood and his rage defied."
Alack that trust should fail!

But the little page he mocked and jeered,
Gay was the song he sung,
And he plucked the old man by the beard
O, but his heart was young!
And he pulled right hard in youthful play
Till he plucked the beggar's beard away,
And there stood Shawn of Dun Carracleigh.
Full loud his laughter rung.

And there stood Shawn, all so good to see,
Now let the joy-bells chime.
Of Irish manhood full six-foot-three.
Love brings the summer clime.
And when this pother the King did know,
He out from the church did furious go,
And he bid his smiling queen also.
Spring is the mating time.

And by them quick went the prince so proud.
The hawk is flying by.
His face was like the grey thunder-cloud.
Hark to the lost lamb's cry!
He flung himself on his chafing steed,
And rode away at his utmost speed,
And no good wish did he make, or deed.
The shepherd's arm is nigh.

Then slow did follow the fair young bride,
Strew roses for her feet!
Her own true lover was by her side.
And O, but youth is sweet!
And the little page with laughter gay,
From whose smooth chin with a great display
There hung the beggar-man's beard of grey.
Woe that time is fleet!

But loitering last came knight and dame,
So ends this holiday.
To whisper oft their grief and shame;
Much did they find to say,
How she bid a prince come forth to woo,
And then his fond heart broke in two;
This was no thing for a maid to do.
All on the King's highway!

THE ART OF SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART.,

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

BY ADRIAN MARGAUX.

THE President of the Royal Academy is a somewhat curious example of the doctrine of heredity. He is the first painter of his family. But his father, Ambrose Poynter, was an architect who gave promise of achieving the highest distinction, when loss of sight ended his career, whilst his mother was a grand-daughter of Thomas Banks, R.A., the eminent sculptor. No painter of to-day has shown in his pictures a finer understanding of architectural refinement and statuesque beauty than Sir Edward Poynter.

Quite early in life Sir Edward seems to have decided not to follow in his father's professional footsteps. The physical delicacy of his boyhood probably had an important influence in shaping his determination. Born in Paris on March 26th, 1836, he was brought back to London a few months later, and received his education successively at Westminster School, Brighton College, and Ipswich Grammar School. At sixteen the doctors decided that his winters must be spent in a warmer climate, and owing to their decree he was thus early brought into contact with the artistic traditions and classical beauties of Italy. The youth's first efforts with the brush were in water-colour sketching from Nature, an art in which he had taken a course of lessons from a private teacher before leaving England. But at Rome, in November, 1853, Edward John Poynter happened to meet Frederick Leighton, and this chance meeting had an important consequence upon his future career.

Photo by] [*Russell & Sons.*

SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A., AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO.

Leighton was then painting his first great picture, "Cimabue's 'Madonna' Carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence,"

"ATALANTA'S RACE." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.
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and was full of enthusiasm for classic art. Between seventeen and twenty-three there is the gap which divides youth and manhood; nevertheless, a warm friendship rapidly developed between the two future Presidents of the Royal Academy—a friendship which lasted until the death of Leighton more than forty years later. Poynter was privileged to witness the progress of the great canvas in his friend's studio throughout the whole winter, and, coupled with Leighton's brilliant conversation, it made the most powerful impression upon his mind. He returned to England in the spring determined to be a figure-painter.

With his health re-established, there followed two or three years' hard work in London—first at Leigh's (now Heatherley's) School in Newman Street, Oxford Street, then in the studio of Mr. W. C. T. Dobson, R.A., and finally in the Schools of the Royal Academy. Before his term at the Academy Schools had run its course, the fascination of Paris asserted itself, and for three years he worked there in the *atelier* of Gleyre, among his fellow pupils being Whistler and Du Maurier. Poynter became one of the fraternity whose Bohemian life, as narrated by Du Maurier in "Trilby," makes such entertaining reading. But according to the President's recollection, the heroine of the novel had no flesh-and-blood existence in the studio of the Rue Notre-Dame des Champs. Possibly the real "Trilby" was the "Carrie" of Malines, near Antwerp, of whom Mr. Felix Moscheles has given an account in "With Du Maurier in Bohemia." The same book, by the way, gives one a significant hint of Poynter's personal popularity in the student quarter of Paris. "Did you know *un nommé Poynter?*" asked Du Maurier of Moscheles, who had just met him at Antwerp, and was still under the impression that he was a Frenchman, this being almost his first question when they were speaking of Paris experiences.

So far, it must be confessed, the path of the young artist had been a

"IDLE FEARS." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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"THE MESSAGE." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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very smooth one. A sympathetic father, with the will and the power to provide him with the best educational training, a congenial master, and appreciative friends, had cheered and stimulated the most strenuous studies. If there is little or nothing in the record to encourage a young man who has to struggle along without such aid, he may surely take heart of grace from the story of Sir Edward Poynter's first experiences of the powerful body which was one day to make him its President.

Poynter had painted several pictures in Paris, among the number "Mercury with the Cattle of Apollo," and a scene from Dante, "The Angel Crossing the Styx." On returning to London in 1860, "Mercury" was sent to the now extinct British Institution, and "The Angel," under the attractive title of "Heaven's Messenger," to the Royal Academy. Both were rejected. Poynter seems to have taken the rebuff in excellent part, and the following year he contented himself with sending to the Academy a pen-and-ink drawing of a girl, to which he gave the title "Alla Veneziana," and his modesty had its reward in the acceptance of the little work. In the meantime he had carefully studied the rejected "Heaven's Messenger" with a view to the rectification of such faults in the painting as he could perceive. The amended work was again submitted to the judgment of the Hanging Committee in 1862, but with a result that was little more fortunate. The picture was accepted, it is true, but on Varnishing Day its painter had the misfortune to find that it was "skied." A less ambitious subject, called "A Bunch of Blue Ribbons," which had also been accepted, obtained much better treatment. The "bunch of blue ribbons" were held by a modern young lady, who is arranging them in her hair with the aid of the looking-glass on her dressing-table, the maiden's face being presented to us through the mirror's reflection. The little picture, although pleasing enough, was not one to attract much attention to a new-comer in painting, and at the age of twenty-six, Poynter, unlike Leighton and Millais, can hardly be said to have put his first foot on the ladder of fame.

"PEA-BLOSSOM." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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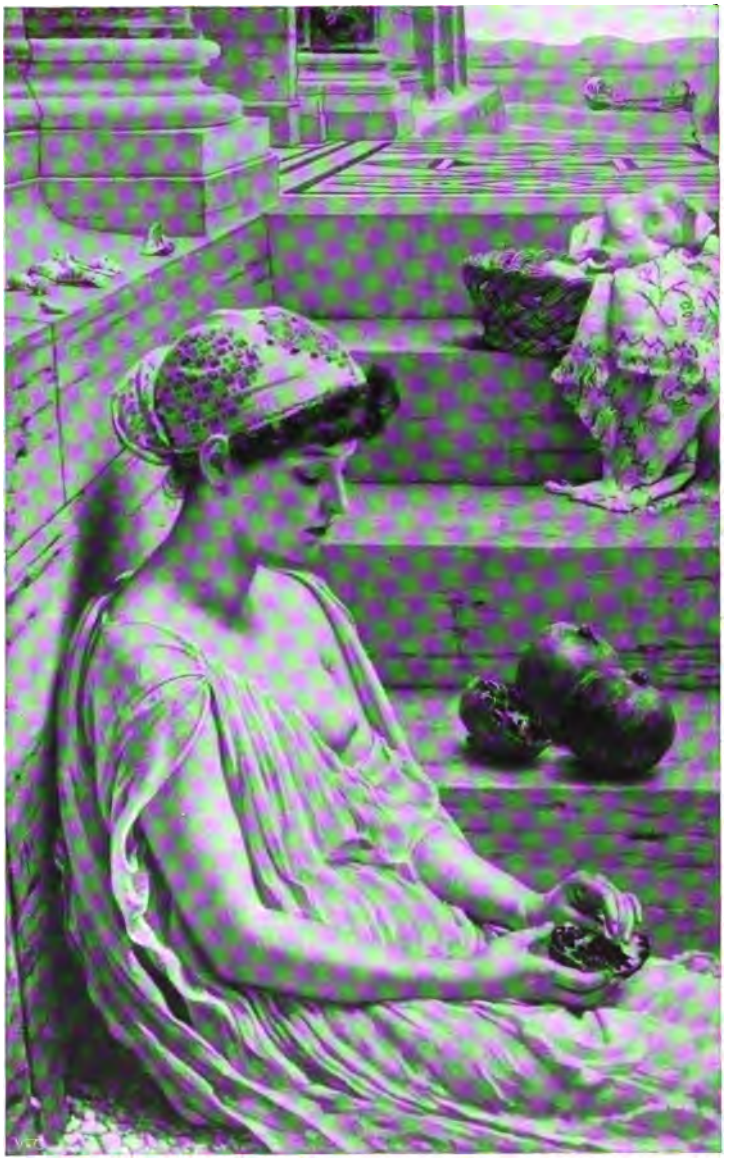

"UNDER THE SEA-WALL." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.
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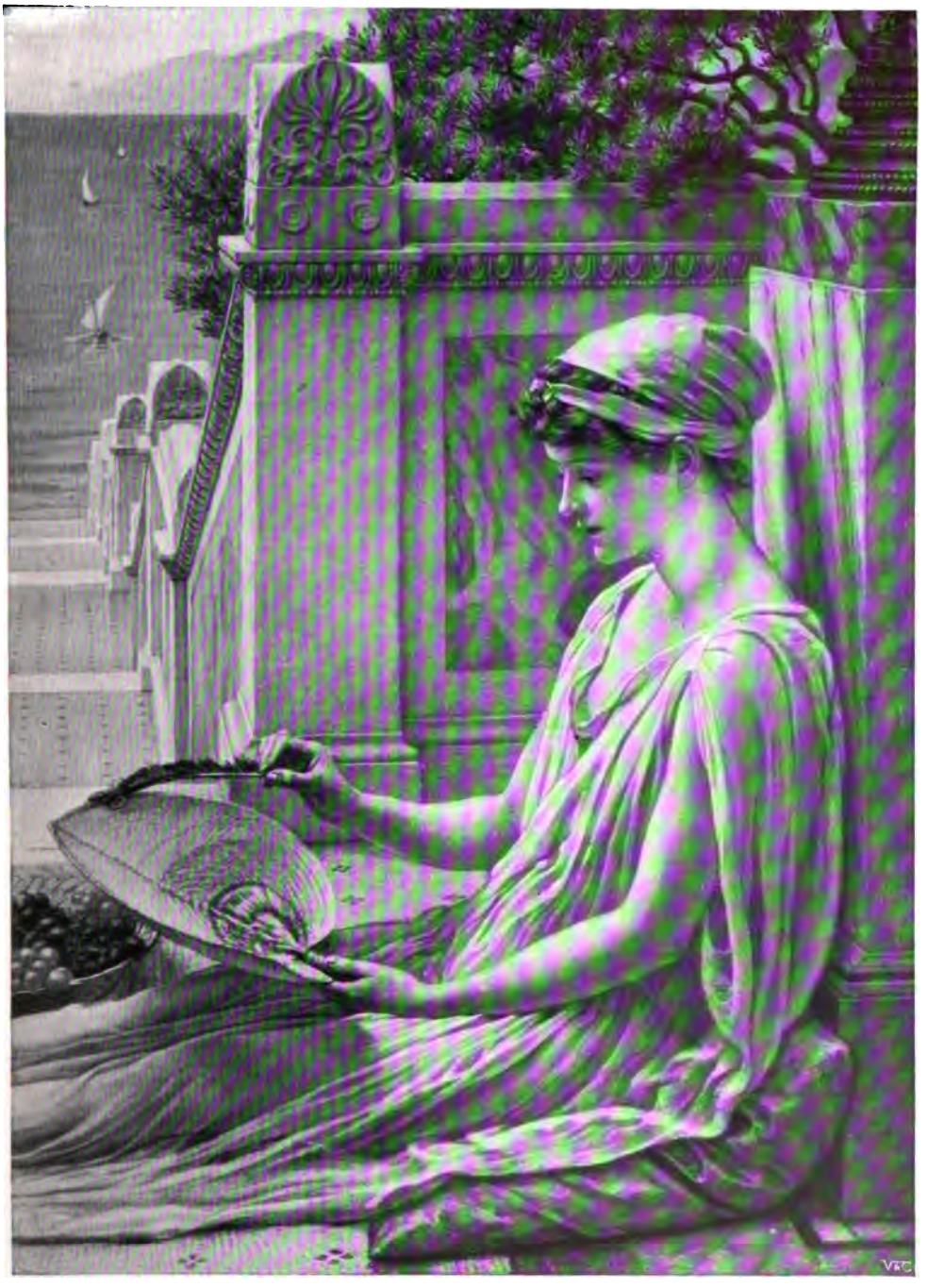
For some time to come after this he devoted the bulk of his time to miscellaneous work of a kind which doubtless did much to strengthen technical skill. Designs for stained-glass windows and decorated ceilings in connection with the work of Mr. W. Burgess, an architect with a passion for the mediæval; panels in mosaic for South Kensington Museum in conjunction with his friend Leighton, who was instrumental in procuring him the commission; and, lastly, black-and-white illustrations for Mrs. Jameson's "History of Our Lord," and Dalziel's edition of the Bible, as well as occasional illustrations in the famous *Once a Week*, gave him plenty of employment till 1864. In that year he reappeared at the Royal Academy with "On Guard in the Time of the Pharaohs." This picture, although it found a purchaser, had no decisive effect on the artist's reputation, but with 1865 came the exhibition of a work, somewhat similar in subject, which proved to be a turning-point in his career. This was "Faithful unto Death," which is reproduced in these pages with the permission of its present owners, the Liverpool Corporation, by whom it is regarded as one of the treasures of the Walker Art Gallery.

One day Mr. Poynter read in the newspapers that the excavations at Herculaneum had revealed the form of a Roman soldier, who, from his position, appeared to have been on guard when the eruption of Vesuvius overwhelmed the city, and to have faced death rather than desert his post. The possibilities of the incident thus suggested, as the subject of a picture, appealed with peculiar force to his imaginative and technical qualities, and the result proved that he did not misjudge his power. The picture, for its size—which is only 29 inches by 45 inches—was a great and immediate success, impressing the critical few by the skill with which the dread determination of the man's face, and the weird gloom of his surroundings, were depicted, as much as the uncritical many, to whom it



"A GREEK GIRL." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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"HORÆ SERENÆ." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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was a masterly rendering of a great sentiment. The picture was purchased by Mr. Charles Langton and, by him, presented to Liverpool's municipal art collection in 1874.

The success of "Faithful unto Death" doubtless emboldened the young artist to undertake a work of the first importance in size and subject, "Israel in Egypt," which was exhibited at the Academy in 1867. This *magnum opus* was the sequel of a little sketch which he had made one night at the Langham Sketching Club. "Work" was the impromptu subject which the members of this famous little coterie had set themselves, for their two hours' essays, in the studio close to Langham Place. Poynter bethought himself of the labours of the Israelites for their Egyptian taskmasters as an illustration of the theme, his mind probably being steeped just then in Biblical history in consequence of his contributions to Messrs. Dalziel's enterprise. When the sketch was finished within the prescribed time and stuck upon the walls with the rest, his fellow-members of the Club crowded round it with spontaneous exclamations of surprise and admiration. They urged him upon the instant to "make a picture of it." The Langham Club then, as always, included many of the rising painters of the day, and their advice was not to be lightly disregarded. Mr. Poynter set to work almost at once upon the undertaking, making studies for the Egyptian temple and the other important objects in the picture, and selecting models for the numerous figures. "Israel in Egypt," by the way, is one of several pictures which the artist has painted from models direct on to the canvas, without having to make preliminary studies of the pose of the figures. This circumstance may explain the comparative rapidity with which so large a work, full of difficult detail, was executed.

"THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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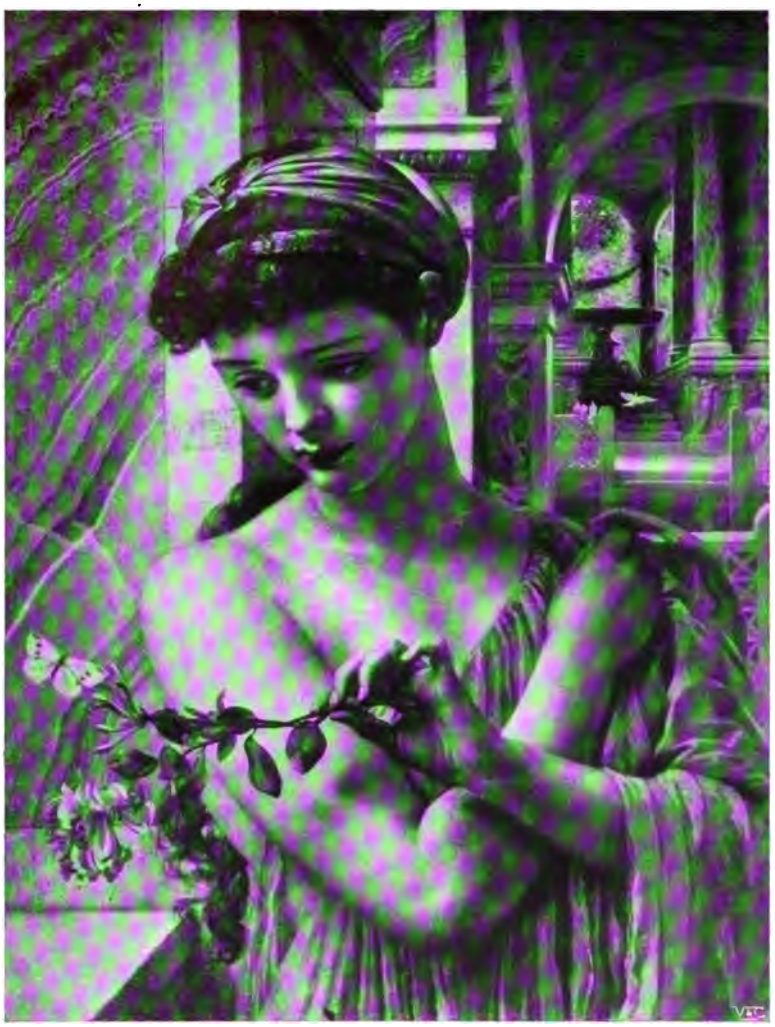

"PSYCHE IN THE TEMPLE OF LOVE." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.
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When "Israel in Egypt" was exhibited, the picture created almost as much enthusiasm among the general body of visitors to the Academy as the little sketch had done in the select circle of the Langham Club. Mechanical engineers took great interest in it, and one of the most eminent of their number, the late Sir John Hawkshaw, made it his own. The purchaser had one criticism, however, to make upon the picture. He considered that the painter had underestimated the number of men who would have been physically capable of dragging the enormous weight represented by the colossal statue of the lion. Mr. Poynter remembered the large experience Sir John must have had of the cumulative power of manual labour, and offered to make such an alteration in the picture as would meet the criticism. This was effected by painting out a small part of the canvas, and filling it to the edge with additional slaves, thus suggesting an indefinite number of figures.

In the following year the artist was hardly less successful with another important picture, having for its main feature the representation on a large scale of strenuous muscular exertion. "The Catapult" relates to the use of the ancient engine of war at the siege of Carthage, and the nude or semi-nude figures propelling it are all of Roman soldiers—one of the huge wooden beams of the catapult bearing the significant inscription, "Delenda est Carthago." As an exhibition of the painter's skill in depicting the human form when undergoing violent effort, the work is even more striking than "Israel in Egypt," but it lacked the broad pictorial effect of the latter. Taken together, the two pictures firmly established their painter's reputation and secured his election as an Associate of the Royal Academy.

But the trend of talent thus brilliantly demonstrated was not further pursued. None of Sir Edward Poynter's subsequent pictures have had the dramatic force of "Israel in Egypt" and "The Catapult," and most of them have aimed at the beauty of repose rather than that of movement. There could in this respect be hardly a greater contrast than between the quivering forms of the

"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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"NAUSICAA AND HER MAIDENS PLAYING AT BALL." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.
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Israclite slaves and the Roman soldiers, straining their every nerve in the accomplishment of a terrific task, and the graceful girl-figures who were their immediate successors on Sir Edward's easel—"Proserpine" and "Andromeda."

"Perseus and Andromeda," which was seen at the Academy in 1872, was one of four important works painted by Sir Edward Poynter on commission from the Earl of Wharncliffe for the decoration of the billiard-room at Wharncliffe Hall, near Sheffield. Three of these subjects were taken from classical lore, "Perseus and Andromeda," "Atalanta's Race," and "Nausicaa and her Maidens Playing at Ball," and the fourth "More, of More Hall, Slaying the Dragon of Wantley," from an old English legend having a local and genealogical interest for Lord Wharncliffe.

Few people nowadays read Percy's "Reliques," and recourse must be had to that treasury of old English ballads for a full account of the incident upon which, at the request of Lord Wharncliffe, Sir Edward Poynter based his picture. Dr. Percy describes the ballad in question as being to the ballads of chivalry in general what "Don Quixote is to prose narratives of that kind—a lively satire on their extravagant fiction." It may also be regarded apparently as a poetical version of a legal contest on the subject of tithes, occurring in the early years of the reign of James I., wherein Lord Wharncliffe's ancestor championed the popular side. The "two days and a night," for instance, in the following lines are supposed to have had reference to the duration of the trial-at-law :—

> Two days and a night with this dragon did fight
> Our champion on the ground.
> Tho' their strength it was great, their skill it was neat,
> They never had one wound.

On studying the ballad, Sir Edward Poynter found it desirable to make one or two departures from its text, the introduction of a distressful maiden bound to a tree being a piece of the painter's licence.

"WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

Reproduced by permission of Major Joicey, owner of the original, and of Mr. Thomas McLean, Haymarket, S.W., publisher of the large plate.

"MORE, OF MORE HALL, SLAYING THE DRAGON OF WANTLEY." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.
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In the midst of these important works—June, 1877—the full honours of the Royal Academy were bestowed upon Sir Edward Poynter. Since then his most important works have been "A Visit to Æsculapius," "The Ides of March," "The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon," "Horæ Serenæ," and "The Ionian Dance." "A Visit to Æsculapius," exhibited in 1880, was purchased by the Chantrey Trustees for £1,000, and now hangs in the Tate Gallery. Sir Edward Poynter states that among all his pictures it is the one which he himself likes best, but public opinion has not endorsed this preference. It represents on the painter's part a vast amount of careful labour, elaborate studies having been made for all seven figures on the canvas, both draped and nude. The incident it depicts is described by a quotation from one of the Elizabethan poets, Thomas Watson:—

> In times long past, when in Diana's chase,
> A bramble bush prickt Venus in the foot,
> Olde Æsculapius helpt her heavy case
> Before the hurte had taken any roote.

From the financial point of view the purchase of this picture has proved one of the best investments made by the Chantrey Trustees. In recent years small "Poynters" have changed hands at prices approximating to that which was paid for this *chef d'œuvre*.

"The Ides of March," which, exhibited in 1883, was purchased for the Manchester Art Gallery, makes a stronger appeal to the popular interest, representing as it does one of the best known episodes in the tragedy of Julius Cæsar, the tyrant and his wife gazing at "heaven's portent"—the comet flashing across the sky—as they pace the halls of the palace, whose magnificent architecture gives the painter full scope for his distinctive powers. The subject of the picture was, of course, suggested to Sir Edward Poynter by the passage in Shakespeare's play wherein Calphurnia exclaims—

> When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

"The Queen of Sheba," completed in 1890, was not sent to the Academy, but through engravings it has become fairly familiar to the general public. It is one of Sir Edward's largest canvases, and represents, I believe, a greater expenditure of labour than any other

"PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA." BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.
Reproduced by permission of the Earl of Wharncliffe.

"THE IDES OF MARCH."

By Sir Edward J. Poynter, Bart., P.R.A.

Reproduced from the picture in the Manchester Art Gallery, by permission of the Corporation of Manchester.

of his pictures. "The Queen of Sheba" was his main occupation for six years.

Of later years Sir Edward Poynter's preoccupation with official duties has prevented him from embarking on any large undertaking such as "The Queen of Sheba" or "Israel in Egypt." He has been obliged to content himself with pictures having but one or two figures, such as "Psyche in the Temple of Love," "When the World was Young," "Idle Fears," and "Under the Sea-Wall," which are reproduced in these pages. In "The Temple of Love," Psyche is painted with a butterfly, which is to be regarded as her symbol because it illustrates the freedom of the soul.

The official duties, which have been growing heavier with advancing years, include the posts of Professor of the Slade Art School at University College, and Principal of the South Kensington Schools, which have given place to the Directorship of the National Gallery and the Presidency of the Royal Academy.

To the National Gallery, Sir Edward Poynter has made since his appointment in 1894 many important additions; and the baronetcy which was conferred upon him only two years ago was no complimentary honour, but a recognition of real national services in the realm of art. Nevertheless, besides a certain number of portraits, Sir Edward has been able to continue to contribute to Burlington House characteristic works which have shown no falling off in their technical skill and beauty. But they have been conceived in his home overlooking the Park at Knightsbridge, and carried to completion in his workmanlike studio just off Fulham Road, in the midst of one of the most strenuous of the many strenuous lives that are led in the great world of London.

"HERMIA AND HELENA, IN SHAKESPEARE'S 'A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.'"
BY SIR EDWARD J. POYNTER, BART., P.R.A.

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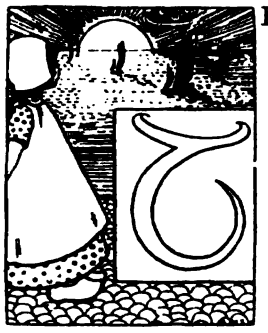
THE KNIGHT ERRANT.

By H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON.*



THE sun streamed upon the gardens of the Exhibition grounds, and through the drumming of the band could be heard the intermittent reports of rifles in the galleries and the gathering roar of the switchback. Lady Molly Calverley lifted her sunshade ever so little and peeped at her neighbour in the next chair.

"Oh, Molly, whatever will Graham say?" inquired ten-year-old Cicely, tugging at her arm.

"You should not say 'Graham.' It's rude," declared Molly in a corrective voice. "And I have not the faintest idea what *Miss* Graham will say. It's nothing to me. I'm not in Miss Graham's charge, like a lot of children. And if you're frightened, you little duffer, I wish I hadn't brought you."

"I'm not frightened," stoutly asserted Cicely. "But Graham—Miss Graham, I mean—will be looking everywhere for us."

"Well, you can just go back to her if you like," said Molly indifferently.

After that Cicely naturally had nothing to say. It was the severest and most conclusive form of argument. And, after all, the responsibility rested with Molly, who was almost grown up, and had been to one ball already. So Cicely relapsed into her chair, and kicked her long black legs, and stared at the passing children.

"Cicely," said her sister presently in a muffled voice of mystery, "Cicely, do you see that man, three chairs from the end in the next row? No, not there, silly; the other way! Don't stare at him, you little ape! Just pretend you're looking about you, and have a look at him."

Cicely's large eyes wandered over the field indicated, and her lips went through a silent motion of counting.

"One—two—three! Oh, yes, I see him—the man with the big ears."

"He hasn't got big ears," said Molly crossly. "He's rather handsome."

"That funny little fellow with the spot on his nose?" inquired Cicely eagerly.

"Ridiculous child, of course not," said her sister severely. "If you are such a fool that you can't count! And don't stare, I tell you. He'll catch you doing it, and it's very unladylike. He's been looking over here a lot."

"Oh!" said Cicely, and divided her attention between sham glances towards the bandstand and surreptitious glimpses of the man.

"Do you suppose it's because he thinks you pretty, Molly?" she asked soon.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied her sister calmly.

"He isn't so very ugly," whispered Cicely at last.

"Children's ideas are different from grown-up people," said Molly in a lofty voice. "Children like pretty faces and fatness."

"I don't like fatness, Molly, indeed I don't!" declared Cicely earnestly.

"That man's distinguished," said Molly impassively.

Cicely gazed at him furtively, ready to whip her eyes away if he should look round. "What's he distinguished for, Molly?" she asked with interest.

"You silly, he's distinguished-looking. I shouldn't be surprised if he were a famous soldier, or a—or a statesman, or a—or an actor," she declared.

"Molly, he's looking over here now," said Cicely in a low voice.

"Look at the bandstand," commanded her sister; "but if you do see him, tell me what he's doing. It doesn't so much matter a little thing like you staring."

Cicely obeyed, and then shot the keen glance of the child athwart the chairs.

"He's getting up," she murmured with rising excitement.

"Look away now," said Molly trepidantly. "I'm going to look myself, and it wouldn't do for us both to stare."

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As she spoke she lifted her sweeping lashes and let a serene gaze drift slowly across the open theatre of seats. It rested with chilling indifference, scarcely even with observation, on the young man—or seemed to. He was standing up, adjusting his frock-coat and surveying his surroundings with impartial equanimity. Molly's gaze touched his and floated coldly away. But underneath that glacial front pulsed the excited blood.

"He's going to move. See where he goes," she enjoined Cicely.

Cicely's little head went frankly about on her shoulders, as she openly tracked the stranger, without shame or concealment.

"He's coming round at the back!" she almost shouted in a whisper. "He's coming towards us! Oh, Molly, what shall we do?"

"Do? Why, nothing. Sit where we are," declared Molly shortly, but her heart was in a whirl of excitement and alarm. Then she added sharply: "You shouldn't have stared at him, you little ass! That's what's done it."

"But why should he want to come because I stared at him?" said Cicely in perplexity.

"Oh, you don't understand," said Molly. "Where's he now?"

"He's hanging about at the back," said Cicely, twisting her head around. "Now he's got out his handkerchief. I believe he's going to blow his nose. Oh, Molly, what shall we do if he sits down by us? Do you think he wants to marry you?"

"I'm sure I couldn't say," said Molly uneasily. "I wish he'd go away. It's rude to embarrass people like that. No gentleman would."

"Let's go back to Miss Graham," pleaded Cicely.

Molly rose, and the two girls moved swiftly, and even with some suggestion of panic, along the lines of the chairs, and at last extricated themselves from the amphitheatre and emerged into the open. Here they seemed to breathe more freely. Molly cast one hasty glance backward, but in her agitation it was not deliberate enough to enable her to attain her object. She saw nothing of the young man, who was by now a unit among thousands, absorbed, so to speak, "into the brown" of the scene. The tumult in her bosom slowly settled as they proceeded rapidly in the direction of the water-chute where they had basely deserted Miss Graham with Delia and Eileen. The chute was still in full swish, and the assemblage of spectators had increased; but Miss Graham had vanished from the place where they had left her. They went to and fro up and down the platforms, but it seemed in a little certain that she was gone; that, in short, Miss Graham had abandoned them, even as they had abandoned her.

"Oh, whatever shall we do?" whimpered Cicely hysterically, when the large black fact could not be blinked.

Molly's heart was failing her also, but she kept a good face.

"Oh, what does Miss Graham matter?" she answered with tremulous contempt. "But since you're very anxious about her health, we'd better go to the entrance and wait there for her."

"But there are lots of entrances—I've been in three," said sharp-eyed Cicely.

So there were. Molly's spirits descended to a deeper level, but she still maintained her front.

"Well, we can go home ourselves," she declared.

Cicely brightened. "In a cab, Molly! Oh, do let's go in a cab—all by ourselves."

"Nonsense," said Molly curtly. "It would cost——"

Suddenly she ceased rejoinder and progress at the same moment. "Cicely," she asked in an agonised voice. "Have you got any money?"

"No—o," said Cicely in surprise. "You know, Molly, I lent you my two shillings yesterday, and I wish——" But Molly was now too concerned to listen to the hint which was on her small sister's lips.

"Then we haven't got a red cent between us," she said bluntly. "At least—I have two ha'pennies."

"Oh, Molly, what did you do with my two shillings?" demanded Cicely reproachfully.

"Shut up!" adjured her sister. "Can't you see we're in an awful mess? We can't even take a train—not even a 'bus home." They stared at each other. "Oh, don't begin to dribble," said Molly pettishly, as she noticed the dewdrops gathering in poor Cicely's eyes. "We've just got to walk."

"All the way?" ejaculated Cicely with a sob.

"Oh, no, of course not," said Molly satirically; "only half the way, and then we'll sit down in the gutter."

Cicely snivelled, and Molly, angry in her own fears, stepped out quickly.

"Where are we going now?" asked the little girl between sobs. They had passed

"The two girls moved swiftly."

through the court, and were in the open again, in a place comparatively vacant. Molly hesitated, with a vagueness as to her directions. Then she started.

"I declare," she whispered ominously, "he has followed me."

Cicely opened her mouth and stared at the young man, her eyes still wet with tears; and his glance fell on the little girl.

"Come on," said Molly hurriedly, and moved away.

Cicely, rooted to the ground, still stared, her pretty face stained with weeping. She seemed forlorn and solitary to the young man whose glance had accidentally drifted on her. His advance had brought him quite close by now, and he came to a pause in front of her.

"Anything the matter?" he inquired good-naturedly. "Can I help you, little girl?"

He was quite strong and tall, and not ugly, and Cicely liked his face.

"We're lost," she panted.

"Lost!" said he, elevating his eyebrows. "Dear me, what a nuisance! What's to be done?"

"I—I don't know," gasped Cicely, again touched to tears, and blurted out: "And Molly's got no money."

"Molly ate hardly anything."

He looked round, and what he saw was a pretty girl of eighteen, some distance away, regarding the panorama of scenery with an ostentatiously absorbed gaze.

"Is that Molly?" he asked.

Cicely assented. "Yes," she said. "She was afraid you followed us."

"Followed you!" he echoed, puzzled, and allowed his wits to play on the situation. "That would have been rude," he remarked.

"But perhaps I can help you, if you will tell me who you are."

"I'm Cicely and she's Molly," explained Cicely glibly, and drying her eyes.

"Oh, now that's clear, we shall get along

famously," said the stranger, and after a momentary hesitation he moved towards Molly. He removed his hat, but only had a sight of a piece of Molly's cheek, which was unduly flushed.

"I beg your pardon," he began a little awkwardly, "but your sister, Miss Cicely, tells me you have been so unfortunate as to lose yourselves; and if I might be of any use——"

He paused. "It's very good of you," said Molly, with a faint bow of acknowledgment, but not facing him; "but, of course, it's impossible."

"Oh, come, I hope not," he persisted. "Let me put you in a cab."

"Thank you, I couldn't dream of it," said Molly loftily and icily.

"But he says he didn't follow us, Molly," put in Cicely eagerly. Molly said nothing, but began to walk slowly away. The stranger kept pace with her.

"I can't quite say that," he said reflectively; "only, of course, I would not have presumed to speak to you if it hadn't been for your distress. I can't bear to see children crying," he explained.

Molly quickened her pace. "It's very kind of you," she began nervously, but not nearly so coldly, "but we won't detain you if you'll be so good as to direct us to the exit."

"I'm going that way myself, and will show you," he mendaciously responded.

Molly said nothing, and they walked together, trepidation and also a certain wild excitement raging in her maiden heart.

"The fact is," pursued the young man, "we should have a sympathy for each other, for I have got lost, too."

"Lost!" echoed Cicely, opening her eyes wide.

"I've lost my party," he explained.

"That must have been when he was staring at me," thought Molly, with a flutter of satisfaction. She sensibly relaxed.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"But as we've found each other, perhaps all's well," suggested the stranger. Molly had uneasy but not unpleasant thrills. They were by this time nearing the vestibule and getting beyond the reach of the galleries and other entertainments. The young man paused dubiously.

"And as I missed my tea, I'm feeling rather hungry," he said politely.

"We missed our tea, too," said Cicely eagerly.

"That's what's called a coincidence," said the stranger mildly. He still paused; and as he did so, a party comprising several ladies and gentlemen emerged towards them, and several pairs of eyes were focused on them. The young man began to move quickly away. One of the ladies made a stop as if to approach him, and one of the men cried "Travers!" in a voice of surprise; but the young man merely raised his hat and passed on with his charges.

"That's his name. He's Travers," whispered sharp Cicely to her sister. "And those are whom he's lost."

Molly frowned at her, but went on with a beating heart.

This Travers had repulsed his friends, including the lady who—— "I shouldn't like anyone to snub me like that," reflected Molly with pleasure.

"Now I come to think of it, I'm really awfully hungry," said the young man, whose face was now a little redder than it had been.

Cicely gazed at him expectantly. "I think it's a shame your little sister should be done out of her tea, don't you?" he said diplomatically.

"She's not very——" began Molly flutteringly, but the young man had started towards one of the tea-houses, and, somehow or another, Molly followed.

The tea was delicious, and so were the cakes—as Cicely explained later to Eileen: "But I didn't like to eat too much—not too much, you know. It wouldn't have been polite. And Molly ate hardly anything; except an ice and a cream-tart and a sandwich and—and I forget what else."

"Ladies," explained Travers deliberately, as he sipped his tea, "are sometimes trying—particularly when they're old."

"But she wasn't old," blurted out Molly, without thinking what she said; and then she changed colour.

"Oh, she *was*, Molly," said Cicely, devoted in her loyalty to her new friend. "She was about forty."

"Well, not quite so old as that," observed Mr. Travers, "but on the way to it. Some day she'll be that. At any rate, she has lost the bloom of innocence and—well, and innocence."

"Is she very wicked?" inquired Cicely, much interested.

Travers considered. "Not so very," he replied. "Not so wicked as she thinks she is. But let us consider a more profitable subject," he continued, rising; "and as you have both finished, and the afternoon is still

young, what's the matter with the switchback, as the Americans say?"

"Oh, Molly!" cried Cicely, with glistening eyes. "Graham—I mean Miss Graham," she explained glibly to the young man, "wouldn't let us go on the switchback. She says it's unladylike."

"Nothing you or Miss Molly could do would be that," he remarked politely.

"I'm afraid——" began Molly carefully; but somehow he paid no attention, and they found themselves walking in the direction of the switchback.

"Thank you," she said presently, when the time came. "I — I don't switchback."

"Oh, Molly!" protested the excited Cicely. "Why, she switchbacks down the stairs," she declared to Travers.

Molly coloured and looked mustard at her sister, who was, however, oblivious.

"Well, I'm going, anyway," asserted Mr. Travers nonchalantly.

And they all went. And somehow, after the affair of the switchback, it was not possible to get back to the dignified aloofness that had previously existed. Cicely behaved as if her acquaintance of the half-hour were an old family friend, and clung to him, shrieking with childish hysteria. The bloom ripened on Molly's face, and her eyes were liquid, her hair was blown, and her manner was cordial.

"Thank you ever so much," she gushed graciously when it was all over.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," said the young man sententiously, with his eyes on her bright beauty.

"And now I'm afraid we must be going," said Molly hastily. "It's ever so late."

"You must let me put you in a cab," said he, coming back to practical matters, and without waiting for her reply he led the way to the outlet.

"West Kensington — Kensington — possibly Bayswater," reflected Mr. Travers, as he shut the door, but Molly called out: "Hargrave Street."

He paid the cabman and watched the cab drive off, thoughtfully, and twenty minutes later he had recovered his friends, one of whom was evidently in a bad temper.

"And who may those children have been?" she asked with cold indifference.

"I haven't the ghost of a notion," said Mr. Travers coolly. "They had lost their way, and I found it for them."

"It was a long operation," suggested the lady with a glacial sneer, and added: "That elder girl looked a sly thing."

Meanwhile Cicely, radiant and unmanageable, was talking volubly in the hansom.

"Fancy, he paid for the cab! I saw him through the peep-hole at the back."

"Of course he did," said Molly shortly. "Any gentleman would."

"Oh, Molly, how much did he spend on us?" asked Cicely in sudden and triumphant dismay.

"What does it matter? A mere nothing," said Molly tersely. "That sort of person has lots of money."

"What sort of person?" asked Cicely.

"Oh, don't bother; and don't squeeze up against me like that. You're spoiling my dress; and if you can't stop fidgeting, I'll stop the cab and walk," said Molly, lapsing into disagreeableness.

This checked the younger girl for a time, and she sat still and communed diligently with her own thoughts; but as they were nearing Hyde Park Corner it was Molly who spoke.

"Did he say he didn't follow us?" she asked abruptly.

"What, Travers?—no—yes," responded Cicely, with a sweet in her mouth.

"What's that you've got?" inquired Molly sharply.

"Only some chocolates Travers gave me," said Cicely, confused by this assault.

"You'd no right to take them," said Molly severely.

"But—Molly," pleaded the perplexed child, "you took tea."

"That's quite another matter. Tea's different," said Molly with dignity; and when Cicely had been thus reduced to silence and shame, she said: "Of course he did. He told a lie."

Cicely turned this over with the sweet in her mouth; but though it was obviously an attack on her friend, he was already too far distant for it to rankle. She let it pass and resumed work on the chocolate. She looked out of the cab window.

"Will it be dark when we get in?" she asked interestedly.

"No, donkey!" said Molly; and suddenly and with impressiveness: "Now, mind this, Cicely: if you're asked by mother or Evelyn, he didn't follow us; but if Delia or Eileen asks you, he did."

"Isn't it nice to be followed?" inquired Cicely with languid interest, for the chocolates sufficed to absorb attention. "I should

"She caught sight of him."

PENRHYN STANLAWS.

like to be followed," she pursued, as she received no answer, "if it was Travers." She dipped into the chocolate-bag. Molly was peeping at herself in the little glass beside the window and patting her hair.

"I do look a sight," she said. "Did I look like this all along?" she demanded anxiously of her sister.

Cicely scrutinised her. "No; it was the switchback," she averred. "I saw your

hair come loose, going down the first time, when you grabbed Travers's arm."

"I didn't!" said Molly indignantly. "You stupid little thing! if you——"

"Oh, but, Molly, you did!" persisted Cicely earnestly. "When you nearly fell back at the bumping-place, and your legs went up, and——"

"If you tell such stories, where do you expect to go to? Hold your tongue!" said Molly sternly. Cicely was mute, but obstinate. She sank into sulky silence until the cab drew up. But when they had descended, it was impossible to resist the excitement of that triumphant, if scandalous, return. Molly's heart beat fast, but Cicely walked on air and relapsed into friendliness.

"What will mother say?" she demanded in staccato shrieks; and "Will Evelyn be angry? Oh! won't Graham have fits?"

On the doorstep they encountered the Honourable Roger Martin, who was by way of cataloguing Lord Templeton's library. They hailed him.

"Hallo, Tiggy!"

"So you've returned," said Tiggy, examining them critically.

"Is Evelyn in a wax?" "Does mother know?" burst from Molly and Cicely simultaneously.

"Evelyn," said the Honourable Roger deliberately, "is—if I am to credit the reports and may use the phrasing of Eileen—is 'kicking up no end of a shine.' I will not pretend to know precisely what that means, but it was the news brought to me in the library just now. And I believe mother does know—which is precisely why you see me thus, young ladies—on the road to appeal on your behalf to the tender hearts of the police."

"Nonsense, Tiggy!" said Molly not very certainly. "Is—is—is mother very angry? We really couldn't help it, could we, Cicely?"

"No, it was Travers who kept us. He wouldn't let us go, and——" began the traitor Cicely.

"Who may Travers be?" asked Tiggy, fixing his eyeglass to inspect the flushed faces.

"Oh, a man," said Cicely vaguely.

"A man, eh?" said Tiggy thoughtfully, and turned to the door and rang. "Well, as you have decided to return to your sorrowing family, my mission is unnecessary, and I will give myself the privilege of introducing you and restoring the prodigal daughters."

Molly's eyes flashed gratitude momentarily, for this was much better than facing the storm alone; and, being now admitted, Tiggy brought up the rear of a dejected procession.

Eileen and Delia flew out on them with a rain of questions and ejaculations which was not encouraging.

"You'll catch it!"

"Hasn't Evelyn been going on?"

"Where have you been?"

"Look out for beans!"

"It means," Tiggy was explaining to Lady Templeton, "that these precious children, being unhappily separated by the crowd from Miss Graham, lost themselves; but owing to the kindness of a stranger, one—what did you say the name was?" He turned to Molly.

"Travers," said Cicely glibly.

"Oh—a certain Travers," resumed Tiggy, "they were eventually set upon the right road and reached home safely."

"It's a mercy!" said Lady Templeton vaguely and in a relieved voice.

"Who was this man Travers?" inquired Evelyn sharply.

Molly regarded her elder sister with defiance, but Cicely, who had been kept unduly out of the talk, burst in: "A man in a frock-coat and with a nose; and he gave me chocolates, and us both tea, and——"

"What disgraceful conduct!" remarked Evelyn to her mother, elevating her eyebrows. "This escapade certainly should settle the question of the Hollands' dance."

Of course, the brunt of this attack fell upon Molly, and it had been aggravated by Cicely's wagging tongue. The child was admonished in the severest terms by her indignant sister and resumed her sullen mood of the cab.

"It is aggravating to have the little beast giving one away like that," complained Molly to the sympathising Delia. "She can't keep her tongue quiet for ten seconds."

But Cicely had her private and separate audience in the nursery, where she slept with Eileen and Marjorie. There her own full and adorned version had full sway, and she had her revenge.

"You should just have seen her—the way she went on! She had four switchbacks, and she screamed, and seized Travers round the neck. It was awful!"

"What did Travers do?" asked Eileen with interest.

"Oh, he just went on, and asked her if she'd have another. And she kicked her legs up, and her hair came down, and——"

"Where did it come down to?" inquired Marjorie sleepily.

"Oh, I'm telling you, silly," said Cicely. "She says she didn't, but she did. She did

"Watching something or someone in the far distance."

kick her legs up. She squeaked out: 'Oh, goodness!' and then she grabbed him. And I should think he was about sick of her."

And when sleep was visiting those little heads, memory and her wrongs returned to Cicely. She lifted her face from the pillow. "Eily," she called. Eily grunted. "She can give herself what airs she likes. But she did kick her legs up."

Fortunately Molly was not aware of this unauthorised version of history, which was for private circulation only. The forces arrayed against her in the open were those of Evelyn; but Molly did go to the Hollands' dance, after all, which may have been due to the friendly offices of the Hon. Roger Martin, Lady Templeton being negligibly indolent. It was, according to the more or less patronising phrase of the ladies who write Society news for the halfpenny papers, "a boy and girl affair," but there were also present some "smart young married women" who were naturally in great request. Yet Molly enjoyed herself, since she did not come into conflict with those voracious and all-engrossing creatures.

It was at the end of the fifth dance that she caught sight of him. Travers lolled against a chair-back and surveyed the company indifferently. Possibly he would have preferred the smart young married women who were not there. His eyes roamed indolently over the ballroom and met Molly's almost as she discovered him. Recognition leapt

into his; he started, apologised to a lady whose fan he had knocked down, and threaded his way towards her. Molly, safe from the embraces of a very gymnastic partner, was settling into her chair when he reached her.

"So we meet again," he said inanely.

Molly was perfectly conscious of his handsome face, but she was interestedly watching something or someone in the far distance. Lady Templeton was deep in conversation with a friend, and Evelyn was—well, one never knew what became of Evelyn on these occasions.

"I hope you got home safely, Miss Molly," persisted the fatuous Travers.

It was time he had a lesson. Molly's gaze came back slowly from the middle distance and rested on his face. Her heart pulsed desperately; but it is so heroes—and, incidentally, heroines—die.

"I beg your pardon. I have not the pleasure——"

The lash fell, and Travers, poor Travers, whose chocolates had lasted Cicely until that very evening, turned scarlet under it. The weals broke out on his healthy, florid face. Then (for he was not so very young) he recovered himself.

"Are you not the Miss Molly I had the pleasure of meeting in Earl's Court Exhibition?" he asked pleasantly.

"I have not had the pleasure of meeting you," said Molly, meeting his gaze coolly.

Now he smiled. "I am afraid I have a bad memory for faces. Forgive me," he said with a bow. He moved a little aside and stood, unembarrassed, watching the throng. But Molly was far from being unembarrassed.

If he had shown confusion, she would have triumphed and perhaps relented. But, having made his apology, he stood there unconcerned. She began to feel uncomfortable, and she was furiously indignant with him for making her uncomfortable. She was relieved when Mr. Martin came to claim her.

"Tiggy," said she after the dance, "you remember that man whom we met at the Exhibition? Well, he's here, and he insulted me."

"Insulted you!" gasped Tiggy, searching for his eyeglass.

"Yes, that man over there. See. He came up and addressed me as if he knew me. He ought to be taught a lesson in manners. Awful cheek, wasn't it?"

"Terrible cheek!" said Tiggy, staring, glass in eye. "What did you do?"

"I?" said Molly in cold surprise. "Of course, I turned my back on him."

"Oh!" said Tiggy, and after a pause: "I suppose I had better give him a lesson—an emphatic one."

"Would you really, Tiggy?" asked Molly doubtfully.

"By Jove, yes, I'll teach him!" said Tiggy, and marched off.

Molly waited tremulously, fidgeting with her gloves. If they should come to blows then and there for her sake——"

Out of that dividing crowd emerged Tiggy with the stranger, come, no doubt, to renew his apologies. There was, however, no stain on his face or disorder in his apparel. He was immaculate.

"Lady Molly, let me introduce to you Sir Edward Travers," said Tiggy with gravity. Gravity also was on Travers's face. Molly bowed nervously.

"May I have the pleasure of——"

"I don't think——" said Molly, but he had already her card and was jotting initials down.

"I wouldn't have touched him with a barge-pole," Molly explained to her sisters next day, "only he danced so beautifully."

"But you didn't know that till you tried," said Eileen bluntly.

Molly deigned no reply. "Anyhow, it's cleared up the scandal," said Delia, with a sigh of relief.

"Scandal!" said Molly coldly. "I have yet to learn that when a gentleman is kind to a girl in distress, it's a scandal. Besides," she added complacently, "I had Cicely with me."

"DID I HEAR FOOTSTEPS?"

FROM THE PICTURE BY E. ROBERTS.

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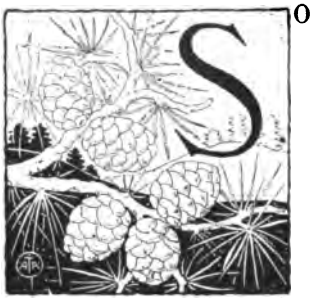
In the Silence of the Sleep-Time.

By ETHEL TURNER.*



OMETHING waked her—the oppression of the hot summer night, perhaps—perhaps a mosquito within the nets, circling around her face till the faint breath of its wings could actually be felt.

She sat up in bed, an instinct of something wrong turning her hot in the darkness. The next second a hand lighted a candle with a silent match and surrounded it with a large, open book to cut off most of its light. In the faint gleam left, she saw her husband, partially dressed and busy with something in his hand.

"What is it?" she said in terror.

He took a step to the bedside—put his hand over her mouth.

"H'sh—don't move—don't speak," he whispered. "Someone has broken in—I'm going down."

"Elsie!" she gasped, leaping up.

He forced her back on the bed.

"He won't go near her—do you hear?—be quiet! He is in the dining-room; it is the silver he wants, of course."

She flung her arms round him, clung to him.

"Let him have it; what do I care for hateful silver? He will have a revolver, too; he will shoot you." Her clinging became frenzied. "Let him have everything we've got, only stay here, stay here."

It was quite a strange face that was bent over her in the faint candlelight; not in the least like the good-humoured, light-hearted husband she knew. He was almost rigid with anger.

"Let go," he said. "Stay there and be quiet! There is no danger to me at all—unless you make it by letting him hear us. Let go—do you hear?"

He flung her off, then stooped and gave her a desperately hurried kiss.

"Don't be such a miserable little coward, Laura," he said.

The next second he had moved noiselessly from the door, his revolver held in a hand hanging motionless but tense by his side.

She moaned beneath her breath; trembled till all the lace canopy of the bed was a-quiver. Obey and lie still! How could she? She crept up and flung round her her dressing-gown, that lay ready for the visits she sometimes paid to her children in the night.

Her children! The little boys had just developed whooping-cough, and were sleeping in a room opening out of her own, where she could hear their slightest movement. But the one little girl who was delicate had been put to bed temporarily in the downstairs day-nursery, until she could be sent away from the infection; and in the servants' sitting-room, which opened into it, a nurse was sleeping on a sofa, to be near if she needed anything.

What if the man should pass the nursery—if a shot should be fired there!

She crept on to the landing — peered downward into the frightful darkness.

Her brain was bursting with distorted memories of the newspaper reports and the neighbours' excited tales. For some time this retired suburb, with its big houses and stores of silver and jewellery, had been the hunting-ground of a gang of clever and desperate burglars. They had got away on no less than four occasions with their booty intact. They had recklessly injured property, struck senseless a gardener who had obstructed them, and, last of all, had gagged and tied up a terrified girl who was flying from her room to give the alarm. Not a householder but slept with a revolver under his pillow, and a grim determination not to be niggardly in using it.

For a couple of weeks now, however, all had been quiet, and the talk of engaging a night watchman came to nothing. The one constable who, for a short time, had seen nightly visions of his stripe, became dull of eye once more, and kept only a resigned and mechanical vigilance over the shadowy houses that lay in their spacious gardens well back from the road.

* Copyright, 1904, by Ethel Turner, in the United States of America.

Laura clung to the banister-rail, every nerve astretch. The silence was frightful—a hot, brooding horror, that only by biting her lips could she keep from tearing with a wild shriek.

Where was her husband? Creeping, creeping through the black hall to the dining-room, and perhaps a second shadow creeping after him from the smoking-room.

"The very house seemed to shiver—to rock on its foundation."

She must shriek—shriek till the darkness parted and showed her starting eyes what was going on.

Crash!

The very house seemed to shiver—to rock on its foundation. The feltlike blackness cracked about her head, then floated here and there in choking masses, disintegrated from the great body of darkness by the explosion.

She was on her knees now, clinging to the rails like a maniac drowning at sea. Jim was dead. A gang of men—they had all shot together. Jim was dead!

She forced her body down the staircase; her legs utterly refused to support her, but by clinging to the rails she huddled herself along that she might go to him.

Then the yellow light of the hall gas flashed in her eyes. Jim had lighted it himself, and was standing under it—right under the orange-coloured glass shade. Jim, in his tennis flannels, unhurt, with the revolver that he had transferred to his left hand still smoking.

Her heart rocked with a joy that was more fiercely painful than the terror of a moment back.

"'S'allright, Laura," he said, in a thick voice, and hardly looking at her.

His jaw seemed to have widened; you saw his teeth.

She gave a little, trembling, shuddering cry.

"'S'allright," he muttered.

She looked where he looked and saw a big, prostrate figure—a blot of ugliness in the yellow harmony of her beautiful hall. A dark stream coloured the white bearskin rug on which he had dropped. Beside him lay some things fallen from his pocket—a silver cream-jug she had used at her merry afternoon tea-table not eight hours ago; the little boys' heavy christening-mugs; a massive knife-rest. All splashed with red.

The man began to groan heavily. He rolled over on to his back.

A shudder ran over the one who had fired—all the colour dropped out of his face. He had the look of physical sickness—absolute nausea, that Laura had seen him wear once before, when he had been forced to cut off the head of a fowl that a dog had half killed.

He lurched rather than walked over to the telephone and gave the handle a turn.

By this time the dishevelled and terrified heads of the servants were peeping through doorways; they framed his words for him, each one of them—police-station, of course. But he said "99," and that was, as they all knew, the doctor's number.

"Charlton speaking," he said. "Hurry

down, Frank, old man, and bring the right remedies. I've s—shot a man."

Then police-station. They were evidently sleepy-headed down there. He had to repeat the message. "A burglar—yes—I've got him in my hall. I shot him. Bring an ambulance."

On the bearskin, the enemy of society, one of the vermin that men feel themselves at liberty to shoot down like dogs, lay and listened and writhed and groaned with pain and futile wrath.

Charlton saw that his head was lower than his chest, and pushed a cushion beneath.

"Would you like a drink?" he said.

"No, curse you!" growled the man, and looked him in the face.

"Why, it's Wilkins!" said Charlton in surprise, seeing the ill-favoured face clearly for the first time.

"So it is," said the man, with a bitter sneer.

Charlton had taken him on a month ago to help him with some work in the garden, on his representing that he had been out of work for months and was next door to starvation. He had paid him good wages and received a fair meed of work, and there was an end to the matter for him.

For his part, Wilkins had found out all he wanted, and departed not ill-pleased with his fortnight, for he had been comfortably housed and fed in the empty coach-house, and gardening was one of the few things in the way of honest work that he was not actually averse from.

And here he was now, right over the threshold of the big house, right in the hall he had caught glimpses of, and actually spoiling one of the "Missus's" fine floor-rugs. The latter fact gave him a savage pleasure.

Yes, here he was, caught like a rat in a trap; lying quietly soaking in his own blood, while every moment there came nearer and nearer the great hand of the Law to thrust him behind the stone walls again.

Caught, too, by the class he hated far more bitterly than the class hated him, and against whom he had ever had his hand raised.

What chance had he ever had?

He looked balefully round the hall he was lying in. Velvet curtains of a golden colour draped all the doorways, the furniture was of rich carved oak, beautiful pictures covered the walls, copper and bronzes gleamed in the yellow light.

These were the manner of walls that brooded over the comings in and goings out of the two boys who had shouted in the garden he was digging, and hidden his wheelbarrow and played other tricks on him.

"With the revolver that he had transferred to his left hand still smoking."

But what of the walls that had seen his as tender years?

What chance had he ever had?

A few feet away from him stood the figure of the man who had shot him: well proportioned, athletic, graceful in its light

flannels; he felt the wild contrast between it and his own hulking, sprawling shape. On the stairs was a woman in a pale blue, trailing gown, with waves of shining hair falling all round her shoulders; he saw her frightened eyes gazing at him as if he were some wild animal from a jungle. From the doors peeped the heads of terrified servants, who gazed at him with the same expression.

A murderous hatred of them all swelled his heart. He groaned again like the wild beast they thought he was.

Jim turned his eyes away from the sight and fretted himself at the time that must elapse before the doctor could arrive.

The man continued to writhe. He worked one hand under him until it had grasped the revolver in his pocket. He worked the revolver free of his coat, but kept it hidden in the long hair of the rug.

He moved his finger along till it touched the trigger, and he had the muzzle pointing straight at the breast of the woman in the blue gown. It would do the "class" good to feel what it was like to lie and welter in one's own blood. And better hit the woman, for that would be a harder hit for the man. He felt he could lie there and laugh himself sardonically to death if he could thus rake the decks of the "class."

His finger trembled on the trigger.

But even as it trembled, a child burst out from a doorway some distance down the hall—a child in a nightgown—a very indignant, small child, for her nurse was going on in a most ridiculous fashion, it seemed to her, who had no experience of hysterics subdued from terror into stifled sobs and laughter.

Wilkins recognised her as the one of the three children the permanent gardener had had the greatest "down" upon, for she had a maddening habit of putting a whole family of microscopic china dolls, that she called fairies, to bed in the heart of his roses and lilies, and then getting them up in a morning with the aid of a bit of stick.

Wilkins, himself, had not disliked her during his brief time of service in the garden. She was such a queer youngster. She used to flit about the beds for all the world like a big, white, starched butterfly, and he had often seen her kiss a pansy's face, and had once been made quite uncomfortable because she had dropped down and wept her heart out over some daisies that were dead, some rubbishy little pink daisies that he had forgotten to water.

"His arm held out."

And she had done something even queerer than that. She had actually fluttered right up to him one day when he was sweeping up leaves. She had a bath-towel tied on behind her for a train, and a wreath of leaves on her head.

"Oh," she said beseechingly, "do be the prince, will you? I'm Cind'rella, and *nobody* will be the prince."

And there had come to him then a faint, faint gleam of the days when his own life had been just such a little span. And someone, probably the nurse within the walls of one of the many charitable institutions that had bounded his childhood, had read him a fairy tale.

He had looked at her dumbly one moment. The next he was ashamed of his emotion, and gruffly told her to get out of the way of his broom.

There she was now, standing at a door in the hall, wrathfully complaining that nurse was "so silly."

A distorted memory of that far-away fairy story gleamed once more across the dark crannies of his brain. "And they all lived happily to the end of their days!"

He looked again at the "queer little youngster."

"Well, who's stopping them?" he growled to himself, and let the muscle of his right arm soften again.

Laura took several hasty steps down the stairs to go to the child and save her baby eyes the horror of the sight on the rug. But Charlton waved her resolutely back, and called out that he would get the child. He could not bear his wife to step across the rug.

He strode hastily down the hall to the nursery door, and the child made a glad dart to him; but he pushed her off a moment. How dare he lift her while he had his revolver still at full cock in one hand? He pushed her aside with one hand and laid the deadly thing down for a moment on a lamp-bracket a few feet still further away.

Then he went back and picked her up and walked with her to the banisters, and lifted her up above his head for mother to take, and so avoid the way by the bottom of the staircase where the rug began.

He had not quite freed his arms from her warm little body—Laura had just grasped her, was lifting her over—when the servants, watching on the upstairs landing, shrieked hideously in sudden chorus. He pushed the child over and sprang round.

With a sudden drop all the blood went out of his heart—the capacity of movement deserted him. His man had struggled up to his feet and was standing in the middle of the hall, his arm held out, his revolver pointed directly at the blue figure that was grasping in utter unconsciousness the little white one.

Too late to get his own revolver—too late to leap forward and strike that other one down—time enough in the attempt for both lives to be snuffed out!

"Wilkins!" His voice had a screaming note in it—the thin, shrill note of a hysterical schoolgirl. "Anything I've got—anything!"

The man gave a great laugh, lowered his weapon, and dropped down on the carved chair near the telephone.

"Only thought I'd make *you* sweat a bit, Gov.," he said, and mopped his own damp brow. "All I got up out my reclinin' position for was to give you this."

"This" was the revolver which he now held out, the barrel in his own hand, the handle turned to Jim. Jim took it, his whole arm trembling like a leaf.

"Th — th — thank you, Wilkins," he stuttered.

Wilkins gave his arm a benevolent wave, as much as to say: "Don't mention a trifle like that." "You can keep it as a little shoovenir, Governor," he said; "it'll come in 'andy when your own's wored out with the 'ard work you give it."

"Th—th—thank you, Wilkins," repeated Jim, and this time his voice trembled.

Wilkins was ashamed of his magnanimity.

"Didn't want to get me neck stretched," he growled.

When the police arrived, Charlton elaborately explained that his mind was so intent upon getting his wife and child upstairs, and out of danger from a possible second revolver, that he quite forgot the front door had been left open.

SERENADE.

AFAR beyond the hill's dim breast,
Beyond the restless wastes of sea,
The dreaming moon has sunk to rest—
Beloved, do you dream of me?

For us no golden moon may rise;
The sun that rose for us is set,
Still, when the night-winds kiss your eyes
Beloved, do you quite forget?

Oh, sun and moon they go their way,
And day is long and night is sweet
Between the gold hours and the grey,
But never sun and moon may meet.

And still, beyond some outmost star,
Perchance their lonely ways are met,
Perchance where sleep and silence are
They dream of one another yet.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.

LOCAL RATES AND TAXES.

By JOHN HOLT SCHOOLING.

[*The final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, the Annual Reports of the Local Government Board, and other official returns of local rates and taxes.*]

THE British taxpayer is a patient beast, but there is a limit even to his patience. He grudges no money that may be wanted for the proper defence of the country's welfare; indeed, the British taxpayer in these small Islands practically pays the cost of the naval defence of the whole of the vast British Empire, and the cost of the military defence of a very large part of the Empire; but the prolonged and indefinite continuance in peace-time of an Income tax at a war-time rate presses heavily upon citizens who are mulcted in other directions innumerable for rates and taxes, direct and indirect. And in regard to local taxation especially, the payer of local rates and taxes has just cause for grave disquiet, being possessed by a soundly based belief that his money is wastefully spent, spent injuriously to the country's interests, spent upon enterprises which are outside of the proper functions of local expenditure, spent not always with due regard for honest dealing, and spent too much.

Extravagance—want of thrift—has always been one of our national characteristics, common, I believe, to other Northern nations as contrasted with the money-carefulness of Southern races. This characteristic may not be wholly injurious in conditions that safely afford the practical results of its working out. But in present conditions which point clearly to the necessity for thrift, personal thrift and national thrift, this reckless extravagance of a community of small islanders in the Northern seas menaces them with the danger of lessened strength with which to fight the great trade battle of the twentieth century with powerful Continental and over-sea rivals whose strength is daily increasing.

Already there are many signs that individuals are keeping down their expenditure, and although it may not be practical nor perhaps even desirable to lessen national expenditure—bearing in mind the necessity for the efficient keep of our Navy and Army—it is most desirable and necessary that the spending power of the various local bodies should be checked and considerably curtailed.

What are these local rates and taxes? Multitudes of people who pay these boorishly delivered open "demands" for their money are too disgusted with the whole process of rate-collecting and rate-spending to give them any attention beyond a grudging payment. And many other persons are really ignorant as to the inside meaning of the ugly little papers of demand, knowing only that they must pay these demands, be sold up, or sent to gaol. The haphazard, casual threat of the anonymous highwayman in the days of old, "Your money or your life!" was perhaps less objectionable than the damnable iteration of the legalised and increasing demands of to-day made upon every British ratepayer by anonymous overseers, guardians, and spenders of money raised by local taxation. You could let fly a pistol at the highwayman, but now you can do nothing but pay up.

This local taxation is nominally for local purposes. And local purposes are those purposes for which local public authorities are now authorised by the law to spend money. Full advantage is taken by local authorities throughout the Kingdom of the facilities for the easy spending of money given to them by the reorganised scheme of local government and finance instituted in 1888, and which came into full force in 1891. Look at the list of loans sanctioned by the Local Government Board to the local spending bodies throughout the Kingdom. In one year only, you will find more than sixty closely printed pages of these sanctioned loans, many of them applied for by twopenny-halfpenny little places whose local authorities

are possessed by the current disease of spending public moneys. In addition to these more than sixty pages of loans sanctioned by the Local Government Board, there are thirteen pages of loans locally committed independently of the sanction of the Local Government Board, and a lot more pages full of provisional Orders for loans and confirming Acts for loans. These dry official records contain fitting confirmation of the local lust for spending—for consuming—money, just as our trade returns contain ample evidence of our national lust and of our gigantic capacity for the consumption of foreign, non-British goods and produce of all sorts, reckless of the far more important consideration of efficient production. But we are now beginning to see that our cheap consumption of the goods of our foreign trade rivals is cutting away the ground from under our feet as producers. A little thought will show the average man that directly or indirectly he is a producer before he is a consumer—we all play both these parts—and that the part of producer is more important to him than the part of consumer. The opponents of change in our present method of trade can see only one part of the citizen's life—his part of consumer. Just as our local spending authorities put the large consumption of public moneys in the front rank of their activities. No wonder that consumption is recognised as the most deadly disease of our nation. As regards these local rates and taxes, the Royal Commissioners inform the King that our local expenditure is not met entirely out of taxation, since various receipts come in to local spending bodies from sales of property, tolls, dues, tramway fares, etc. The funds which are raised by taxation for local purposes fall under two heads: (1) Local taxes proper, which are now practically confined to rates; (2) Money grants from the central Government of the country to local authorities.

Dealing now with local rates, which receive obloquy—general, deserved, and, so far, futile—throughout our country, these rates are based upon a very simple form of taxation. For they are all levied upon property which is immovable. A shrewd device, and one that, doubtless, was in shrewd Mr. Wemmick's mind when, in Dickens's "Great Expectations," he was constantly urging his friend to acquire "portable property." One of the many advantages of living in a motor-van-house is that you cease to comply with the simple principle of immovability upon which these local rates are based.

TABLE A.

Spending Authority.	Name of Rate.	Purpose of Rate.
Guardians and Overseers.	Poor Rate	Relief of the poor, and minor services
County Council . . .	County Rate (part of Poor Rate)	Police, main roads, asylums, etc.
Town Councils	Borough Rate, and in some cases Watch Rate (both sometimes part of Poor Rate)	Municipal services, police and asylums in some cases, etc.
Town Councils	General District Rate or Improvement Rate *	Roads, sanitary services, etc.
Urban District Councils .	General District Rate or Improvement Rate *	Roads, sanitary services, etc.
Rural District Councils .	Poor Rate	Highways and general expenses
Rural District Councils .	Special Expenses Rate . . .	Sanitary works
Parish Councils . . .	Poor Rate	General parochial services
Parish Councils . . .	Lighting Rate	Lighting
School Boards † . . .	Borough Rate in Boroughs . .	Elementary education
	Poor Rate outside Boroughs .	

* The Royal Commissioners say in this connection that "it is impossible to describe here all the special arrangements made under Local Acts." These special arrangements cover many kinds of municipal or local "enterprise."

† The recent Education Act abolishes these School Boards, and the rates formerly levied by them are now levied, as Elementary Education rates, by the local authorities as a distinct part of their ordinary rates—that is, as part of the County and Borough rates.

It is not convenient here to set out the numerous and rather complicated methods used in ascertaining the value of the many kinds of immovable property subjected to local taxation. But I may state the following condensed particulars as to the principal spending authorities outside of London, the rates to which these authorities have free access, and the more important purposes upon which the rates are spent. *See Table A.*

The above are the principal spending

authorities outside of London. In the Metropolis (not including the actual *City* of London, which manages its own affairs), the principal spending authorities are the County Council, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, the Boards of Guardians and Overseers, the Borough Councils, and the Metropolitan Police Commissioners. All these Metropolitan authorities have recourse to a General Rate under the London Government Act of 1899.

Readers, for the most part well aware of the truly remarkable spending quality developed by the London School Board during the last thirty years, will notice the omission of this first-class spending authority from the foregoing list of Metropolitan spending authorities. But the London Education Bill of 1903, as finally passed, made the London County Council the supreme education committee in place of the notorious School Board. It is probable that the spending record of the latter body will not be dimmed by their successors. It is interesting to note that the rate in the pound levied by the London School Board was as follows:—

Year.	Pence.
1874–1875	1·3
1879–1880	5·4
1884–1885	7·4
1889–1890	8·2
1894–1895	10·0
1899–1900	12·9

Thirty-four years ago, we were, I think, assured that this London School Board rate was never to exceed one penny in the pound.

We have here a sufficiently large number of different spending bodies, each and all of whom may legally come down on the ratepayer for one or more rates per spending body, to the extent of the number of pence in the pound that the particular spending body wants to spend. This or that local authority "makes its rate" at intervals during the year by the following very simple process. The amount of money wanted for spending is divided by the value of the property assessed as liable to this or that rate, and the result thus obtained, if multiplied by 240, gives the number of pence in the pound which is forthwith demanded from the ratepayer. The ratepayer has the satisfaction of checking the accuracy of the amount demanded from him—so many pounds of immovable property assessed, at so many pence per pound—but I have never heard that anyone succeeded in finding a mistake. I expect the rate-collectors work out the amounts demanded by the aid of a printed table of rates per pound, giving the result for each possible combination. If so, the ratepayer has to pay for the very table of rates by which accuracy in the mulcting of him is guaranteed.

The spending power of these many local authorities is now become enormous. How many of us who pay the rates know that in England and Wales these local spending bodies were, up to the year 1900–1901,* receiving and spending public moneys to the extent of 112 millions sterling per year? More than two millions per week! This huge local revenue is almost as large as the net national revenue of the United Kingdom in 1900–1901, although the war had then caused an increase in our national expenditure. And note this. Our national expenditure, down to the last penny, is under the control of one central authority, all the Estimates having to be passed by Parliament. Even with this concentration of national spending authority, we see too often that great waste of national revenue occurs. But our local expenditure of 112 millions per year is in the hands—largely in the unchecked hands—of multitudes of small spending authorities, made up of individuals whose private interests are in many instances more or less closely concerned in the lavish spending of public moneys. There need not, of course, be any actual dishonesty in the spending of these great masses of local moneys, but it is foolish to overlook the considerable opportunity given to local spending authorities lavishly to spend the produce of rates in such a way that the increase of rates paid by themselves individually is far outweighed by benefits, direct or indirect, coming to themselves as individuals from the mode in which the rates are spent. No opportunity and no temptation of this sort exists in connection with the central authority that authorises the spending of the national revenue.

For example, what is the explanation of conditions often seen, when a road is so badly re-metalled that in a few months the job has to be done again? When a piece of public drainage is constantly being tinkered by a leisurely group of workmen, who pull up the road again and again to re-tinker? When, owing to mismanagement of, and extravagance in, local finance, many of the houses in a very important southern town by the sea remain unlet, inhabitants being constrained to leave the town rather than

* This is the most recent year covered by the current official returns.

submit to further extortion? One must think either that the local authorities who do the spending are not competent to see that work is done properly, or that someone connected with the spending of rates does in some way receive benefit from public work being done badly or being done unnecessarily. There is no need to say more on this matter, but it is necessary to point out the opportunity given in many instances to individual members of local spending bodies to benefit at the expense of the ratepayer. Concerning the number of these local spending authorities which exist throughout the country, and as regards only one group of them, Boards of Guardians, there are in England and Wales between 600 and 700 of these Boards, made up of approximately 15,000 individual spending authorities. There is probably less likelihood of these guardians abusing the spending of public money (except by lavishness) than exists in connection with other spending authorities who control the spending of money on public works, etc. The total number of local spending authorities throughout England and Wales is about 28,500, and we have to bear in mind that each of these 28,500 local authorities is made up of a number of individuals who control the spending of public money to the extent of 112 millions per year. If we say that there are 300,000 of these individuals, we shall probably not overstate their number. This number represents, of course, only the individuals who are members of the various local spending boards, etc. No account is here taken of the very large number of the *employés* of these local boards.

All the purposes of the rates set out in Table A seem eminently proper purposes for the spending of public money. They may be classified in the following list of the principal services to the community which are locally administered.

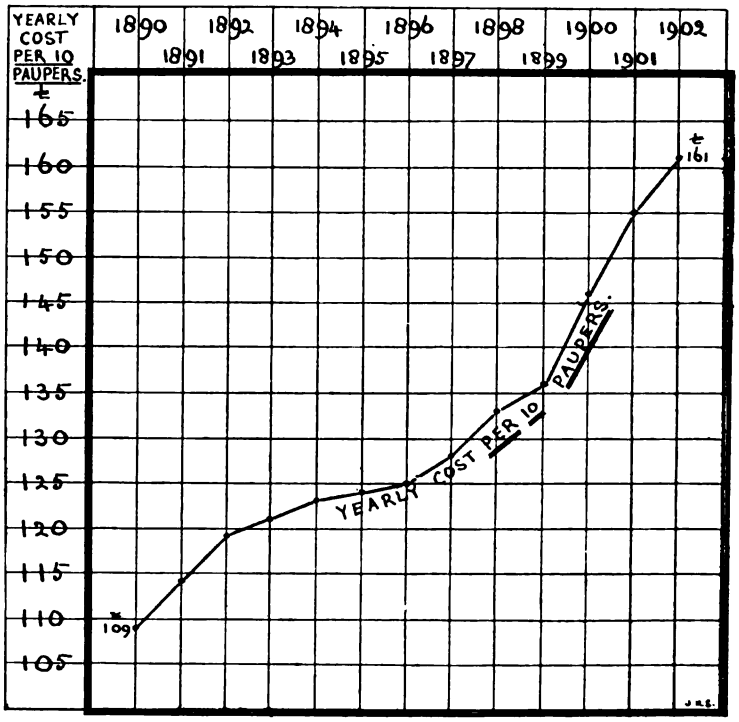
(1) POOR RELIEF, ETC. :—

a. Poor relief.
b. Lunatic asylums.
c. Registration of births, deaths, and marriages.
d. Vaccination.

(2) POLICE AND CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS :—

a. County and borough police.

HAS THIS LARGE RISE IN THE COST OF POOR RELIEF, DURING THE SHORT PERIOD 1890–1902, BEEN NECESSARY? OR WAS IT LARGELY DUE TO LAVISH LOCAL EXPENDITURE?



I. THE YEARLY COST PER TEN PAUPERS, IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1890–1902. *See Table C.*

b. Metropolitan police.
c. City of London police.
d. Criminal prosecutions.

(3) EDUCATION :—

a. Elementary education.
b. Technical education.
c. Reformatories and industrial schools.

(4) PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC WORKS :—

Under this heading are included a large number of miscellaneous services, some of

which, as regards Public Health, are concerned with nuisances, infectious disease, hours and conditions of labour, sale of food and drugs, weights and measures, scavenging and cleansing, parks, housing of the working classes, drainage, baths, washhouses, slaughter-houses, hospitals, mortuaries, cemeteries, etc., etc. And as regards Public Works, these local services are concerned with water supply, tramways, piers, gas and electric light, markets, roads, streets, bridges, public libraries, fire-engines and fire-brigades, etc., etc.

The services in this list, which amplifies the services stated in Table A, may also—to a large extent, at any rate—be regarded as proper purposes for the spending of public money; although—and especially under the head Public Works, which involve a vast expenditure and which are responsible for the larger part of the still rapidly increasing local debt—objection may be raised in regard to some of the services undertaken by local spending bodies as being outside of their proper functions.

But there is one general objection that applies more or less to every service under each of the four main heads now set out—namely, that it is to a large extent impossible for the Local Government Board (in those cases when its sanction has to be obtained), and usually quite impracticable for the mere ratepayer—who does the paying part of the business—to know whether this or that item of expenditure is really necessary, and to prevent the expenditure, if it is necessary expenditure, from being lavish. As good an example of lavish expenditure as one can want to see is given by the returns which show the cost of poor relief over a period of years. Here is a statement, Table B, that shows the amount expended for relief of the poor, and purposes connected therewith, during 1890–1902. The facts for 1903 are not yet published.

TABLE B.—Expenditure on Relief of the Poor, 1890–1902. England and Wales.

Year Ended at Lady-Day.	Yearly Expenditure.	Year Ended at Lady-Day.	Yearly Expenditure.
	£		£
1890	8,434,000	1897	10,432,000
1891	8,643,000	1898	10,828,000
1892	8,848,000	1899	11,287,000
1893	9,218,000	1900	11,568,000
1894	9,674,000	1901	12,120,000
1895	9,867,000	1902	12,891,000
1896	10,216,000		

NOTE.—In addition to the above expenditure, there was also expenditure for relief of the poor which was defrayed out of loans. In 1902 this extra expenditure amounted to £1,590,000.

An increase in the cost of poor relief, from 8½ millions in 1890, to nearly 13 millions in 1902, is a very large increase for the ratepayer to bear; and notice the continuous increase year by year. Let us look if this increase can be justified by a corresponding increase in the number of paupers relieved during the same period.

TABLE C.—Mean Number of Paupers, including Vagrants and Insane Paupers, Annually Relieved in England and Wales; 1890–1902. *And the Yearly Cost per* 10 *Paupers.* [*See Diagram* I.]

Year Ended at Lady-Day.	Yearly Number of Paupers Relieved.	Yearly Cost per 10 Paupers.
		£
1890	775,000	109
1891	760,000	114
1892	745,000	119
1893	759,000	121
1894	788,000	123
1895	797,000	124
1896	816,000	125
1897	815,000	128
1898	814,000	133
1899	832,000	136
1900	792,000	146
1901	781,000	155
1902	801,000	161

NOTE.—For the year 1903, the number of paupers relieved was 823,000.

In Table C we find that, although the number of paupers has increased, yet it has not increased at the pace of the yearly expenditure on poor relief shown in Table B. The measure of the great increase in this important item of local expenditure is seen by looking at the "Yearly Cost per 10 Paupers" given in Table C.

We have no reason to believe that in 1890 our paupers were not sufficiently well treated, and they then cost us £109 yearly per 10 paupers of all sorts. The constant increase in this expenditure has sent up the cost to £161 per 10 paupers relieved in 1902—the last year for which I have the facts. This is an unsatisfactory result to come out. The increase in the yearly cost per 10 paupers is very large, and it is constantly growing. Assuming, as I presume we may, that pauperism is being made more and more comfortable for paupers (if this is

not the case, where does all the large extra expenditure go?), this fact means that this lavish expenditure by local spending authorities tends directly to encourage improvidence and unthrift. The working classes are reckless enough now in their marriages, at ages much below the marriage ages of the middle and upper classes, and in the production of many children. The early marriage age of the parents, and the conditions of their life and of their habits, cause, in fact, the rapid increase of the unfit. And the incentive to further improvidence and to lack of reck held out to the lower classes by this too lavish expenditure upon poor relief by local spending authorities must inevitably lead to the still further increase of the relatively good-for-nothings at the cost of the relatively good-for-somethings.

I suggest that this one item of local expenditure, and the excessive increase in it, does by itself tell us that much of the ratepayers' money demanded of them is not only spent lavishly, but that it is spent injuriously to the interests of the nation. But as the local spending authorities are themselves reckless in expenditure, we cannot —I suppose —expect them to have a care in the direction of not giving any incentive towards recklessness in the lower classes. The important matter of not doing anything to undermine the self-reliance of the nation, which is built up of the self-reliance of the individuals who are the nation, is outside of the possible thought of local spending authorities when they complacently make their poor rate for the ensuing quarter or half-year, and in doing this hold out, year by year, still more incentive to lack of self-reliance.

I have said that the local spending authorities of England and Wales obtain and spend 112 millions per year. Whence do they get this vast amount? We will see. And we shall also see that, in getting this unnecessarily large amount to spend, these local bodies are flagrant offenders against another elementary rule of sound living and of sound finance. They are habitual borrowers, and to an extent that has now become a serious menace to the country's welfare.

Table D shows the sources of the yearly revenue of the local spending authorities of England and Wales. By the way, the primary characteristic of these local authorities is so obvious that in the report to the King the Royal Commissioners call them "Spending Authorities," with a capital A and a capital S.

Of the total receipts by local spending authorities in the year 1900–1901, £111,917,000, no less than 26·7 per cent.

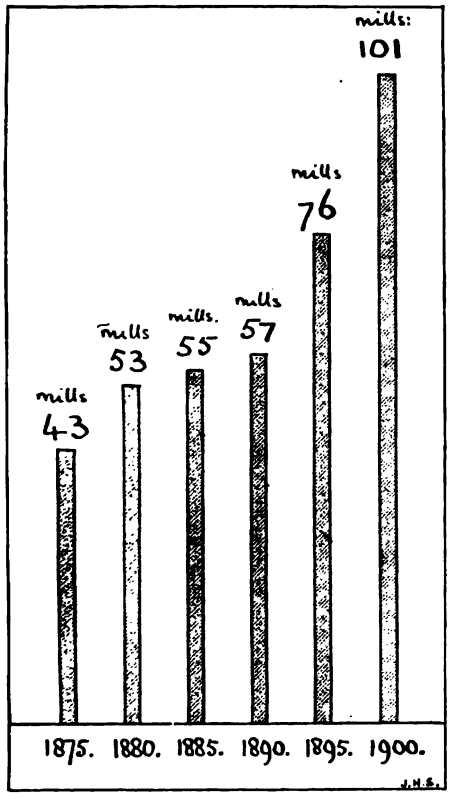
TABLE D.—The Aggregate Receipts of the Local Spending Authorities of England and Wales during the One Year 1900–1901.*

Source of Receipts.	Amount of Receipts.
	£
PUBLIC RATES	42,994,000
GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL EXCHEQUER (These grants come out of taxes raised by the Imperial Government, and thus they are paid by the taxpayer, although not paid directly as local rates)	12,657,000
TOLLS, DUES, AND DUTIES (Including market rents and stallages, and harbour tolls, dues, and duties)	3,933,000
RENTS AND PROFITS OF PROPERTY (Including interest and dividends on investments)	2,171,000
SALES OF PROPERTY	404,000
FEES, FINES, PENALTIES, AND LICENCES	899,000
REVENUE FROM WATERWORKS, GASWORKS, ELECTRIC LIGHTING, TRAMWAYS	13,962,000
REVENUE FROM CEMETERIES, SEWAGE FARMS AND WORKS, BATHS, WASHHOUSES, and open bathing-places, libraries and museums, fire-brigades, lunatic-asylums, hospitals, markets, slaughter-houses, and from harbours, piers, quays, and docks (*excluding receipts already entered under the head of tolls, dues, and duties*)	1,401,000
PRIVATE IMPROVEMENT RATES, ETC.	1,494,000
OTHER RECEIPTS	2,071,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS, EXCLUDING LOANS	81,986,000
LOANS	29,931,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS £	£111,917,000

* The year 1900-1901 is the most recent year for which the facts are published.

of this total was borrowed money. Local rates and national grants (which came out of Imperial taxes) produced 49·8 per cent. of the total receipts. The revenue from water, gas, electric, and tramway undertakings produced 12·5 per cent. of the total £111,917,000. And the balance of 11·0

THE GREAT INCREASE IN LOCAL RECEIPTS.



II. THE TOTAL RECEIPTS OF ALL LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES. FOR EACH FIFTH YEAR, 1875–1900. THESE RECEIPTS INCLUDE RATES, LOANS, ETC. *See Table E.*

per cent. was made up by the other items of receipt set out in Table D.

It is not satisfactory to find that so considerable a part of the yearly receipts by local spending authorities comes from loans. During the last five years for which the facts are published, the amount of these receipts from loans has been as follows :—

	£
1896–1897 . . .	13,340,000
1897–1898 . . .	14,483,000
1898–1899 . . .	19,699,000
1899–1900 . . .	23,439,000
1900–1901 . . .	29,931,000

This large and constant increase in borrowing will doubtless be excused by some persons on the score that the money is mainly used for what are called "reproductive enterprises," coming under the head of public works. I do not question that the money is so used, but I doubt if it is wisely used in this way. Apart from the question of principle—Are local authorities justified in going into business as carriers, sellers of light, librarians, pleasuremongers, etc., etc., with public money for their capital?—there is the practical point that businesses so entered upon by local authorities are often not managed so as to make them, as they are supposed to be, and as they are euphemistically called, reproductive.

For example, take the case of a local spending body that spends a huge amount upon a system of electrical tramways, arranging to pay the money borrowed by a sinking fund * extending over (say) forty years. This is supposed to be a reproductive enterprise which will pay for itself. And it may pay for itself, if it is well managed, at any rate, for some years to come. But I am informed, by persons who understand machinery and electrical machinery, that rapid deterioration occurs in the machinery itself, and that the life of an electrical plant is a short life. It follows that a considerable yearly liability occurs in connection with a "reproductive enterprise" such as this tramway system, involving large depreciation of the capital value of the electrical plant. But is this large depreciation in capital value duly taken into account? I doubt it. The total life of this electrical plant may perhaps be gone in (say) fifteen years—long before the term of the sinking fund has expired. What follows? Another loan for a new fit-out, and another sinking fund, running concurrently with the first sinking fund, and necessitating a double charge upon the receipts of local spending authorities for the payment of loans plus interest; possibly to be followed by yet a third sinking fund, when the second fit-out perishes, before the cost of the original plant has been paid for.

For my part, although I am ready to admit that there is a good deal to be said in favour of these costly "reproductive enterprises" undertaken by local spending authorities, I think they should be left to

* I may say that a sinking fund means the yearly repayment of a loan and the interest upon that loan by a fixed number of equal yearly payments. At the end of the fixed number of years, the loan and the interest upon it are wiped out. I have had actuarially to calculate these sinking funds for local bodies.

the private enterprise of business men who would, it is likely, take good care to protect the capital invested in them. With local bodies, if things go wrong, it is merely a matter of more pence in the pound put on to the rates; with the result that residents are actually driven away from the town, whose trade and position generally starts on the down grade burdened with a heavy debt. The citizens have to bear the burden, not the local authorities who sanctioned foolish expenditure possibly to their own individual benefit.

The enormous increase in the receipts of local spending bodies is seen in Table E, which shows the total receipts, including loans, of the local authorities of England and Wales in each fifth year, starting with the year 1874–1875.

TABLE E.—The Aggregate Receipts of Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales. *And the Receipts per* 100 *of Population.* [*See Diagram* II.]

Year.	Receipts of Local Spending Authorities.	Receipts per 100 of Population.
	£	£
1874-1875	42,736,000	179
1879-1880	52,742,000	206
1884-1885	54,942,000	203
1889-1890	57,288,000	200
1894-1895	75,988,000	251
1899-1900	100,641,000	314

NOTE.—In the year 1900–1901, the last year of which I have the facts, the receipts were £111,917,000, or equal to £345 per 100 of population.

During the twenty-five years covered by Table E, the receipts by local spending authorities have risen from 42·7 millions to 100·6 millions, and to 111·9 millions in 1901. This is a vast increase, but part of it may rightly be attributed to growth of population. However, as Table E shows, when we take into the account the growth of population, we find that the receipts have risen from £179 per 100 of population in 1874–1875, to £314 per 100 of population in 1899–1900, and to £345 in 1900–1901. This is a great increase in the burden of local rates, and the heaviest part of the increase has occurred since 1889–1890—that is to say, during the very period when, as I have often pointed out during the last four years,* we have begun to feel the ill effects upon our industries of our present method of spurious Free Trade. We ought to have had more care, not more extravagance, in our local expenditure, for this greater local extravagance has added to the injury caused to us by our obsolete method of trade.

There is one possible loophole by which the defenders of local lavishness in expenditure may try to justify it. It may be urged that the rateable value of all property assessed to local taxation has increased to an extent sufficient to justify this greatly increased local taxation. We will look into this point. Here are the facts.

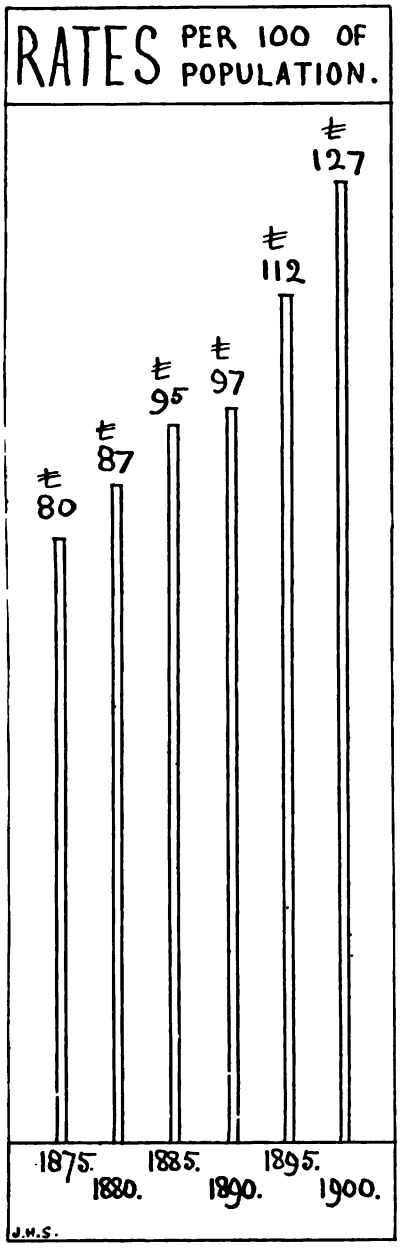
TABLE F.—Rateable Value of all Property Assessed to the Poor Rate in England and Wales during 1874–1875 to 1899–1900. *And the Receipts of Local Authorities per* £100 *of Rateable Value.*

Year.	Rateable Value of all Property Assessed to the Poor Rate.	Receipts of Local Authorities per £100 of Rateable Value.
	£	£
1874-1875	115,647,000	37
1879-1880	133,770,000	39
1884-1885	145,528,000	38
1889-1890	150,486,000	38
1894-1895	161,140,000	47
1899-1900	175,623,000	57

This Table F is instructive. We see that throughout the period observed there was a large increase in the rateable value of property upon which local rates were levied. We see also that during the first twenty years the receipts of local authorities per £100 of rateable value remained practically constant at £38 per £100 of rateable value. Their actual receipts largely increased (see Table E), but their receipts per £100 of rateable value of property remained constant, because there was a considerable increase in the rateable value of the property upon which the local taxation was levied. One would have thought that as there was more property to pay the

* For example. In this magazine, in September, 1902, after a careful examination of our export trade which showed the weak condition of it since the year 1890, I wrote: "The time has come when we ought to reconsider the matter of Free Trade, or of what we call Free Trade. True Free Trade is indubitably the best sort of trade—if you can get it. But true Free Trade is a round game in which all nations must join if the game—Free Trade—is to be played. This essential condition does not exist, for other nations refuse to play the game. It follows that our so-called Free Trade is only a spurious Free Trade which may possibly be injurious to us. Although to my mind any form of Protection is inferior to true Free Trade, it may very well be that a rational form of Protection might be better for us than the spurious Free Trade that we have."

THE UNREASONABLE INCREASE IN LOCAL RATES: HIGHER RATES ALTHOUGH THERE WERE MORE PEOPLE TO PAY RATES. AND, AS TABLE G SHOWS, HIGHER RATES ALTHOUGH THE RATEABLE VALUE OF PROPERTY INCREASED.



III. THE AMOUNT OF RATES (ONLY) RECEIVED BY THE LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES PER 100 OF POPULATION. FOR EACH FIFTH YEAR, 1875–1900. NOT INCLUDING LOANS, GRANTS, ETC. *See Table G.*

rates, the rates per £100 of rateable property should have got smaller, in place of remaining constant at £38 per £100 during 1874–1890. But the local spending authorities did not think this, and Table F shows plainly enough that their method was not only to keep up local taxation, but to demand it upon a largely increased rateable value. These remarks take us up to the year 1889–1890. But if, in Table F, we look at the results since 1889–1890, we see not only that the local spending authorities demanded rates upon a much larger amount of rateable property, but that they also demanded a much higher rate of local taxation upon a much larger amount of rateable property, thus running up their receipts to £57 per £100 of rateable value, despite the large increase in the rateable value of the property taxed.

TABLE G.—Showing the Amounts Received from Rates by all Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales. Not including Grants under the Agricultural Rates Act, Grants from the Imperial Government, Loans, nor any receipts except Rates. [*See Diagram* III.]

Year.	Amount of Rates Received.	Amount of Rates Received.	
		Per 100 of Population	Per £100 of Rateable Value of Property Assessed to the Poor Rate.
	£	£	
1874-1875	19,199,000	80	16·6
1879-1880	22,160,000	87	16·6
1884-1885	25,667,000	95	17·6
1889-1890	27,713,000	97	18·4
1894-1895	33,855,000	112	21·0
1899-1900	40,734,000	127	23·2

NOTE.—In the year 1900–1901, the amount of Rates received was £42,994,000.

In Table G, I show results similar to those in Tables E and F, but based upon the receipts by local authorities from rates alone, excluding grants out of taxes, etc., collected by the Imperial Government, grants under the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, loans (which have to be paid out of receipts), and not including any receipts but rates. Again we see large increases, both as regards the actual amount of rates demanded, and as regards the amount of rates per 100 of population and per £100 of rateable value of property assessed to the poor rate. Indeed, by this last gauge of the increase in local taxation, which is, perhaps, the best we can use, although it somewhat understates the rise in the rates, we see in Table G that the

amount of rates received per £100 of rateable value of property assessed to the poor rate has increased from £16·6 in the £100, to £23·2 in the £100. The increase is to £25 in the £100, in 1899-1900, if we include the grants under the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896.

Surely this disclosure is most unsatisfactory. Not content with demanding the same rates upon a much larger amount of rateable property — which was the local procedure during 1874-1880 (Table G) — these local spending bodies, since 1880, have demanded *higher* rates upon *more* property. And this in addition to a great increase of their receipts from other sources, such as loans, grants, etc.

I have often been puzzled to see the reason why, when many more people come to live in a town, and when much more rateable property comes into existence, the local taxation should increase in the rate per pound, instead of diminishing. As there are more people and more property to pay the necessary local expenses, there ought in reason to be a reduction in the rate of local taxation per £1 of rateable value. But an increase in the rate of taxation usually occurs in place of a decrease. And Table G shows the extent to which this unsatisfactory reversal of reasonable conditions has occurred throughout England and Wales, especially since the year 1880, and with still greater force since the year 1890.

So much for the receipts by local spending authorities. We have looked at them, and arrived, I think, at the conclusion that we have less faith in the fitness of local bodies to receive more than two millions per week of public money, than we had when we began to write or to read this account of their doings.

(*To be concluded.*)

A MEETING.

I HEAR a sound like piping and like sails
In silken talk with wind, and like the speech
Of someone quiet in the blue of dawn,
Along the silent beach.

I see a light as when the last sad star
Flowers faintly in the ashen morning sky,
And long white wings appear and disappear,
And dip and circle by.

I think of violet billows veiled with foam;
I think of all the red of east and west;
I hear the secret stir of nameless dead
Conferring in my breast.

You make me long for echoes and for flowers
And for strange words on lips I do not know;
You make me dream of all I learned to dream,
How long—how long ago!

ZONA GALE.

"HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING!"

FROM THE PICTURE BY A. FORESTIER.

WHILE IT IS YET DAY.

By E. NESBIT.*

"AND is it really true? Are you going to govern the Fortunate Islands?"

"I am, indeed—or rather, to be accurate, I am going to deputy-govern them—I mean, father is—for a year."

"A whole year!" he said, looking down at her fan. "What will London do without you?"

"London will do excellently," she answered—"and that's my pet fan, and it's not used to being tied into knots." She took it from him.

"And what shall I do without you?"

"Oh! laugh and rhyme and dance and dine. You'll go out to the proper number of dinners and dances, and make the proper measure of pretty little speeches and nice little phrases, and you'll do your reviews, and try to make them as like your editor's as you can, and you'll turn out your charming little rondeaux and triolets, and the year will simply fly. Heigho! I'm glad I'm going to see something big, if it's only the Atlantic."

"You are very cruel," he said.

"Am I? But it's not cruel to be cruel if nobody's hurt, is it? And I am so tired of nice little verses and pretty little dances and dainty little dinners. Oh, if I were only a man!"

"Thank God you're not!" said he.

"If I were a man, I would do just one big thing in my life, even if I had to settle down to a life of snippets and trifles afterwards."

Her eyes were shining. They always glittered, but now they were starry. The drifted white folds across her breast stirred to her quickened breath.

"If you loved me, Sybil, I could do something great!" said he.

"But I *don't*," she said—"at any rate, not now; and I've told you so a dozen times. My dear Rupert, the man who needs a woman to save him isn't worth the saving."

"What would you call a big thing?" he asked. "Must I conquer an empire for you, or start a new religion? Or shall I merely get the Victoria Cross, or become Prime Minister?"

"Don't sneer," said she. "It doesn't become you at all. You've no idea how horrid you look when you're sneering. Why don't you——? Oh! but it's no good! By the way, what a charming cover Housman has designed for your 'Veils and Violets'! It's a dear little book. Some of the verses are quite pretty."

"Go on," said he, "rub it in. I know I haven't done much yet; but there's plenty of time. And how can one do any good work when one is for ever sticking up one's heart like a beastly cocoanut for you to shy at? If you'd only marry me, Sybil, you should see how I would work!"

"May I refer you to my speech—not the last one, but the one before that."

He laughed; then he sighed.

"Ah, my pretty," he said, "it was all very well and pleasant enough to be scolded by you when I could see you every day; but now——"

"How often," she asked calmly, "have I told you that you must not call me that? It was all very well when we were children; but now——"

"Look here," he said, leaning towards her, "there's not a soul about. They're in the middle of the lancers. Let me kiss you once—it can't matter to you—and it will mean so very much to me."

"That's just it," she said—"if it didn't mean——"

"Then it shan't mean anything but good-bye. It's only about eight years since you gave up the habit of kissing me on every occasion."

She looked down, then she looked to right and left, then suddenly she looked at him. "Very well," she said suddenly.

"No," he said, "I won't have it unless it *does* mean something."

There was a silence. "Our dance, I think?" said the voice of one bending before her, and she was borne away on the arm of the partner from whom she had been hiding.

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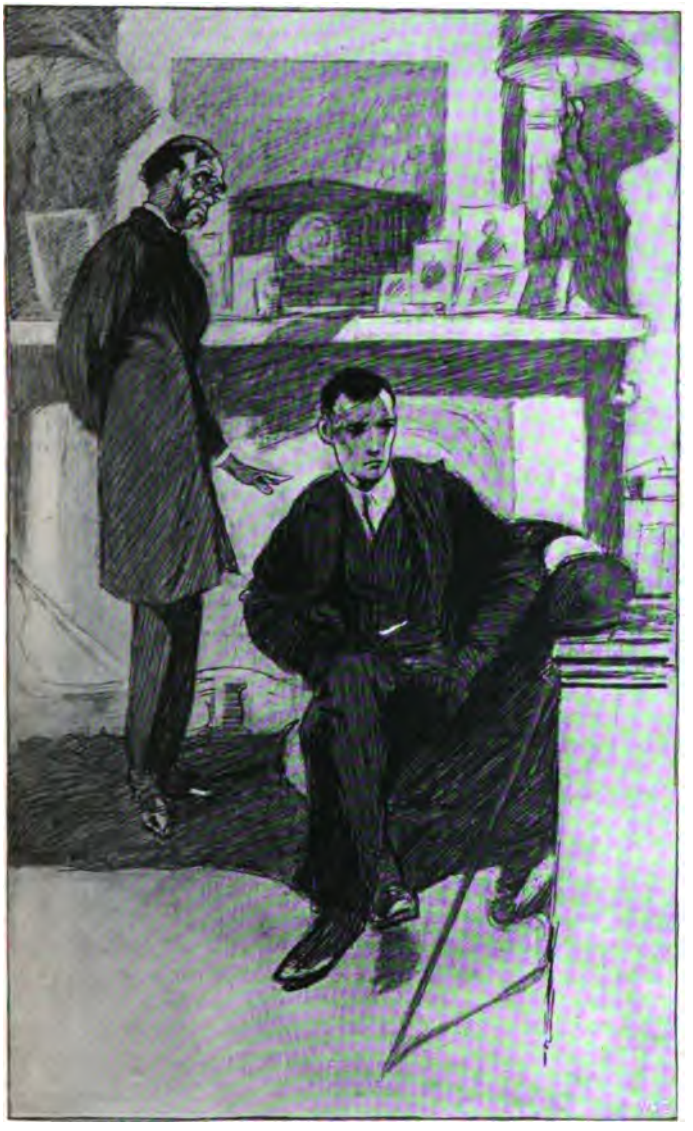
Rupert left early. He had not been able to secure any more dances with her. She left late. When she came to think the evening over, she sighed more than once. "I wish I loved him a little less, or a little more," she said; "and I wish—yes, I do wish he had. I don't suppose he'll care a bit for me when I come back."



"Strongitharm gave his opinion."

So she set sail for the Fortunate or other Isles, and in dainty verses on loss and absence he found some solace for the pain of parting with her. Yet the pain was a real thing, and grew greater, and life seemed to have no taste, even tobacco no charm. She had always been a part of his life since the days when nothing but a sunk fence divided his father's park from her father's rabbit-warren. He grew paler, and he developed a wrinkle or two, and a buoyant friend meeting him in Piccadilly assured him that he looked very much off colour, and in his light-hearted way the friend advised the sort of trip round the world from which yesterday had seen his own jovial return.

"Do you all the good in the world, my boy. 'Pon my soul, you have a tired sort of look, as if you'd got some of these jolly new diseases people have taken to dying of lately—appendi-what's-its-name, you know, and things like that. You book your passage to Marseilles at once. So long! you take my tip."

What Rupert took was a cab. He looked at himself in one of the little horse-shoe mirrors. He certainly did look ill; and he felt ill—tired, bored, and nothing seemed worth while. He drove to a doctor friend, who punched and prodded him and listened with tubes at his chest and back, looked grave, and said: "Go to Strongitharm — he's absolutely at *the* top. Twenty-guinea fee. But it's better to know where we are. You go to Strongitharm." Rupert went, and Strongitharm gave his opinion. He gave it with a voice that trembled with sympathy, and he supplemented it with brandy-and-soda, which he happened to have quite handy.

Then Rupert disappeared from London and from his friends—disappeared suddenly and completely. He had plenty of money, and no relations near enough to be inconveniently anxious. He went away and he left no address, and he did not even write excuses to the people with whom he should have danced and dined, nor to the editor

whose style he should have gone on imitating.

The buoyant friend rejoiced at the obvious and natural following of his advice.

"He was looking a little bit below himself, you know, and I said: 'Go round the world; there's nothing like it,' and, by Jove! he went. Now, that's the kind of man I like—knows good advice when he gets it, and acts on it right off."

So the buoyant one spread the rumour that ran its course and died, and had to be galvanised into life once more to furnish an answer to Sybil's questionings when, returning from the Fortunate or other Isles, she asked for news of her old friend. And the rumour did not satisfy her. She had had time to think—there was plenty of time to think in those Islands whose real name escapes me—and she knew very much more than she had known on the evening when Rupert had broken her pet fan and asked for a kiss which he had not taken. She found herself quite fervently disbelieving in the grand tour theory—and the disbelief was so strong that it distorted life and made everything else uninteresting. Sybil took to novel-reading as other folks have in their time taken to drink. She was young, and she could still lose herself in a book. One day she lost herself most completely in a new novel from Mudie's, a book that everyone was talking about. She lost herself; and suddenly, in a breathless joy that was agony too, she found *him*. This was his book. No one but Rupert could have written it—all that description of the park, and the race when she rode the goat and he rode the pig—and—she turned the pages hastily. Ah, yes, Rupert had written this! She put the book down and she dressed herself as prettily as she knew how, and she went in a hansom cab to the office of the publisher of that book, and on the way she read. And more and more she saw how great a book it was, and how no one but Rupert could have written just that book. Thrill after thrill of pride ran through her. He had done this *for her*—because of what she had said.

Arrived at the publisher's, she was met by a blank wall. Neither partner was visible. The senior clerk did not know the address of the author of "Work While it is Yet Day," nor the name of him; and it was abundantly evident that even if he had known, he would not have told.

Sybil's prettiness and her charm so

"Steps sounded within."

wrought upon this dry-as-dust person, however, that he volunteered the address of the literary agent through whom the book had been purchased. And Sybil found him on a first floor in one of those imposing new buildings in Arundel Street. He was very nice and kind, but he could not

give his client's name without his client's permission.

The disappointment was bitter.

"But I'll send a letter for you," he tried to soften it with.

Sybil's self-control almost gave way. A tear glistened on her veil.

"I do want to see him most awfully," she said, "and I know he wants to see me. It was I who rode the goat in the book, you know——"

She did not realise how much she was admitting, but the literary agent did.

"Look here," he said smartly. "I'll wire to him at once, and if he says I may, I'll give you the address. Can you call in in an hour?"

Sybil wandered on the Embankment for a conscientious hour and then went back.

The literary agent smiled victory.

"The answer is 'Yes,'" he said, and handed her a slip of paper—

Three Chimneys,
Near Paddock Wood,
Kent.

"Have you a time-table?" asked she.

* * * * *

The dusty hired fly lumbered and jolted along the white roads, and in it, as in the train, Sybil read the novel, the book everyone was talking about—the great book—and her heart was full to overflowing of joy and pride and other things.

The carriage shook itself fiercely and stopped, and she looked up from the last page of the book with eyes that swam a little, to find herself at the broken wooden gate of a low, white house, shabbily blindless, and a long way off its last painting and whitewashing.

She paid for the carriage and dismissed it. She would walk back to the station with *him*. She passed in at the rickety gate and up the flagged path, and a bell in answer to her touch jangled loudly, as bells do in empty houses.

Her dress was greeny, with lace about it of the same colour as very nice biscuits, and her hat seemed to be made entirely of yellow roses. She was not unconscious of these facts.

Steps sounded within, and they, like the bell, seemed to sound in an empty house. The door opened, and there was Rupert. Sybil's lips were half parted in a smile that should match the glow of gladness that must shine on his face when he saw her—Her—the unattainable, the unapproachable, at his very door. But her smile died away, for his face was grave. Only in his eyes something that was bright and fierce and like a flame leapt up and shone a moment.

"You!" he said.

And Sybil answered as most people do to such questions—

"Yes, me." There was a pause; her eyes wandered from his to the blank face of the house, the tangle of the untidy garden.

"Mayn't I come in?" she asked.

"Yes; oh, yes, come in!"

She crossed the threshold—the doorstep was dank with green mould—and followed him into a room. It was a large room and perfectly bare. No carpet, no curtains, no pictures. Loose bricks were arranged as a fender, and dead embers strewed the hearth. There was a table; there was a chair; there were scattered papers, pens, and ink. From the window one saw the neglected garden, and beyond it the round shoulders of the hills.

He drew forward the one chair, and she sat down. He stood with his back to the fireless grate.

"You are very, very pretty," he said suddenly. And the explanation of his disappearance suddenly struck her like a blow between the eyes. But she was not afraid. When all a woman's thoughts, day and night for a year, have been given to one man, she is not afraid of him; no, not even if he be what Sybil for one moment feared that this man was. He read the fear in her eyes.

"No, I'm not mad," he said. "Sybil, I'm very glad you came. Come to think of it, I'm very glad to see you. It is better than writing. I was just going to write out everything, as well as I could. I expect I should have sent it to you. You know I used to care for you more than I did for anyone."

Sybil's hands gripped the arms of the windsor chair. Was he really—was it through her that he was——?

"Come out," she said. "I hate this place. It stifles me. And you've lived here—worked here?"

"I've lived here for eleven months and three days," he said. "Yes, come out."

So they went out through the burning July sun, and Sybil found a sheltered spot between a larch and a laburnum.

"Now," she said, throwing off her hat and curling her green, soft draperies among the long grass. "Come and sit down and tell me——"

He threw himself on the grass.

"Sure it won't bore you?" he asked.

She took his hand and held it. He let her take it; but his hand did not hold hers.

"I seem to remember," he said, "the last time I saw you—you were going away, or something. You told me I ought to do something great; and I told you—or, anyway, I thought to myself—that there was plenty of time for that. I'd always had a sort of feeling that I *could* do something great whenever I chose to try. Well—yes, you did go away, of course; I remember perfectly; and I missed you extremely. And someone told me I looked ill; and I went to my doctor, and he sent me to a big swell, and *he* said I'd only got about a year to live. So then I began to think."

Her fingers tightened on the unresponsive hand.

"And I thought: Here I've been thirty years in this world. I've the experience of twenty-eight-and-a-half—I suppose the first little bit doesn't count. If I'd had time, I meant to write another book, just to show exactly what a man feels when he knows he's only got a year to live, and nothing done—nothing done."

"I won't believe it," she said. "You don't *look* ill; you're as lean as a greyhound, but——"

"It may come any day now," he went on quietly; "but I've done something. The book. It *is* great. They all say so. And I know it, too. But at first. Just think of gasping out your breath, and feeling that all the things you had seen and known and felt were wasted—lost—going out with you, and that you were going out like the flame of a candle, taking everything you might have done with you."

"The book *is* great," she said; "you *have* done something."

"Yes. But for those two days I stayed in my rooms in St. James's Street, and I thought, and thought, and thought, and there was no one to care where I went or what I did, except a girl who was fond of me when she was little, and she had gone away and wasn't fond of me any more. Oh, Sybil—I feel like a lunatic—I mean you, of course; but you never cared. And I went to a house-agent's and got the house unfurnished, and I bought the furniture—there's nothing much except what you've seen, and a bed and a bath, and some pots and kettles; and I've lived alone in that house, and I've written that book, with Death sitting beside me, jogging my elbow every time I stopped writing, and saying 'Hurry up; I'm waiting here for you, and I shall have to take you away, and you'll have done nothing, nothing, nothing.'"

"But you've done the book," said Sybil again. The larch and the garden beyond were misty to her eyes. She set her teeth. He must be comforted. Her own agony—that could be dealt with later.

"I've ridden myself with the curb," he said. "I thought it all out. Proper food, proper sleep, proper exercise. I wouldn't play the fool with the last chance. And I pulled it off. I wrote the book in four months; and every night, when I went to sleep, I wondered whether I should ever wake to go on with the book. But I did wake; and then I used to leap up and thank God, and set to work, and I've done it. The book will live—everyone says it will. I shan't have lived for nothing."

"Rupert," she said, "dear Rupert."

"Thank you," he said forlornly, "you're very kind." And he drew his limp hand from hers and leaned his elbows on the grass and his chin on his hands.

"Oh, Rupert, why didn't you write and tell me?"

"What was the use of making you sad? You were always sorry for maimed things—even the worms the gardener cut in two with his spade."

She was struggling with a growing desire to scream and shriek and to burst out crying and tear the grass with her hands. He no longer loved her. That was the lesser evil. She could have borne that—have borne anything. But he was going to die! The intensity of her belief that he was going to die caught her by the throat. She defended herself instinctively.

"I don't believe it," she said.

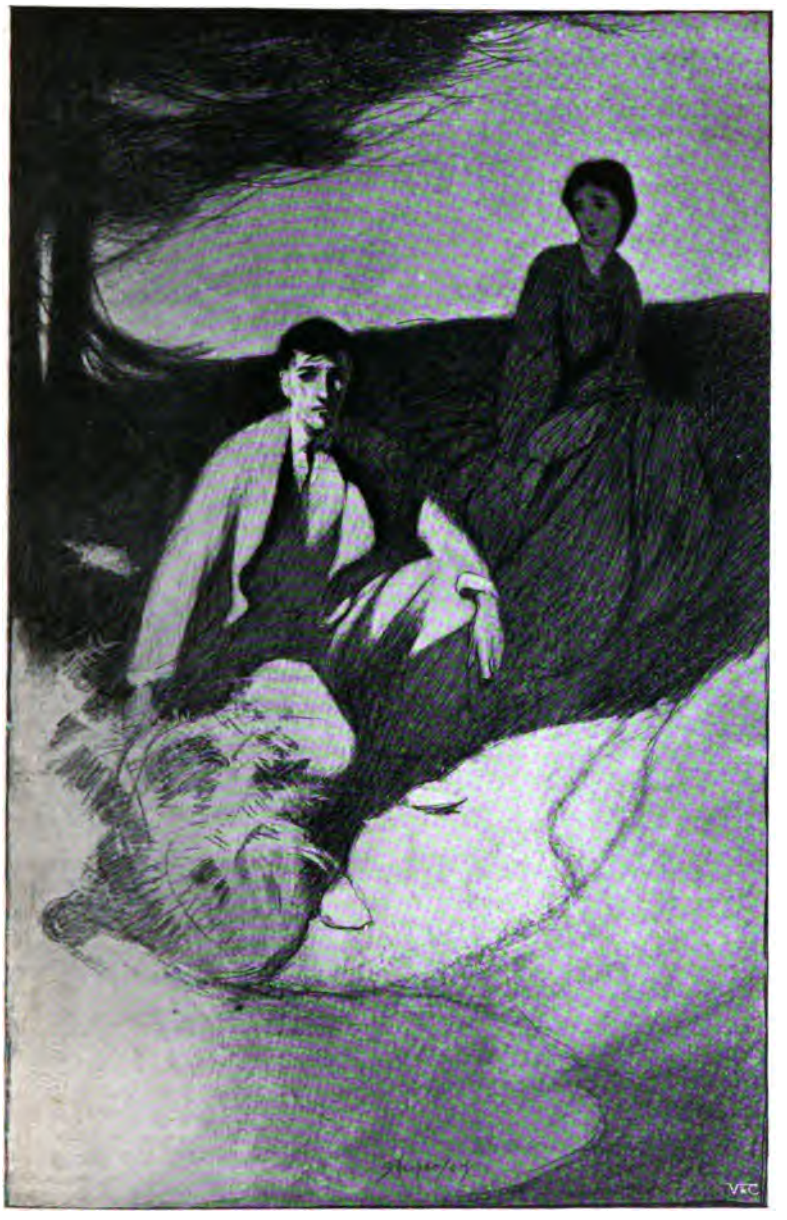
"Don't believe what?"

"That you're going to die."

He laughed; and when the echo of that laugh had died away in the quiet garden, she found that she could no longer even say that she did not believe.

Then he said: "I am going to die, and all the values of things have changed places. But I have done something. I haven't buried my talent in a napkin. Oh, my pretty, go away, go away! You make a fool of me again! I had almost forgotten how to be sorry that you couldn't love me. Go away, go away! Go, go!"

He threw out his hands, and they lay along the grass. His face went down into the



"'What was the use of making you sad?'"

tangled green, and she saw his shoulders shaken with sobs. She dragged herself along the grass till she was close to him. Then she lifted his shoulders and drew his head on to her lap and clasped her arms round him.

"My darling, my dear, my own!" she said, "you're tired, and you've thought of nothing but your hateful book—your beautiful book, I mean—but you do love me really. Not as I love you, but still you do love me. Oh, Rupert, I'll nurse you, I'll take care of you, I'll be your slave; and if you have to die, I shall die too, because there'll be nothing left for me to do for you."

He put an arm round her. "It's worth dying to hear that," he said, and brought his face to lie against her waist.

"But you shan't die. You must come back to London with me now—this minute. The best opinion——"

"I had the best," he said. "Kiss me, my pretty; oh, kiss me now that it does mean something. Let me dream that I'm going to live, and that you love me."

He lifted his face, and she kissed him.

"Rupert, you're *not* going to die. It can't be true. It isn't true. It shan't be true."

"It is; but I don't mind now, except for you. I'm a selfish beast. But this is worth it all, and I *have* done something great. You told me to."

"Tell me," she said, "who was the doctor? Was he really the best?"

"It was Strongitharm," he said wearily.

She drew a long breath and clasped him closer. Then she pushed him away and sprang to her feet.

"Stand up!" she said. "Let me look at you!"

He stood up, and she caught him by the elbows and stood looking at him. Twice she

tried to speak, and twice no voice obeyed; then she said softly, huskily—

"Rupert, listen! It's all a horrid dream. Wake up. Haven't you seen the papers? Strongitharm went mad several months ago. It was drink. He told *all* his patients they were going to die of this new disease of his that he'd invented. It's all his madness. You're well—I know it. Oh, Rupert, you aren't going to die, and we love each other! Oh, God is very good!"

He drew a long breath.

"Are you sure? It's like coming back from chloroform; and yet it hurts, and yet—but I wrote the book! Oh, Sybil, I shall never write another great book!"

"Ah, yes, you will—you shall," she said, looking at him with wet eyes.

"I have you," he said. "Oh, thank God, I have you! but I shall never write another great book."

And he never has.

But he is very happy. And Sybil cannot see that his later works are not in the same field with the first. She thinks the critics fools. And he loves her the more for her folly.

STRENGTH RENEWED.

ANTÆUS, as the ancient poets sing,
Though in his contest with the God of Power
Doomed to be conquered, stayed the fatal hour,
And the onlookers set to wondering.
For overborne, to Earth he'd closely cling,
Until he rose again, a mighty tower.
Thus could the Earth with strength her lover dower,
And very near to victory could bring.
So when I feel thy tender hand in mine,
I, too, dear love, against the world could stand,
Courage divine comes with thy lightest touch.
Afar from thee Antæus-like I pine,
But strength returns now as I clasp thy hand.
Ah! that so slight a thing should mean so much!

ELLEN LEAH REED.

THE CHEAT.

By BARRY PAIN.*

RS. INGELBY and her niece lived at The White House in the middle of the village High Street; but the house stood far back from the street, with a walled garden shaded by many shrubberies in front of it. Mrs. Ingelby loved shade and privacy. For this reason she would have built herself a house further away from the village, were it not that she liked one thing better still, and this was the thing to which she had always been used. She had been born in The White House, and she would die in it. In the course of nature this would happen in a few years, for she was of a great age.

This night, in the drawing-room, a rather elderly maid—she had been with Mrs. Ingelby for the last twenty years—lit the wax candles on the card-table, and put the new packs in their appointed order with the whist-markers. This was in the days before the world knew bridge, and Mrs. Ingelby would have scorned to learn it in any case. She had always played whist, and therefore she would continué to play it. Her game had no modern innovations in it, was fairly sound, but far from being perfect. She preferred a "dummy" game, and always took dummy herself. "Then," she said, "there can be no discussions." She knew her own weakness. In the course of her whist experience there had been some very emphatic discussions, and she herself had done most of the discussing.

Her husband, a man of mild and forbearing temper, would stick with a plaintive obstinacy to his side of the question. His last words before he died were: "Admitting that I did not see the call, my dear, I must still maintain that it was highly injudicious in you to call at all." Her last words to him were: "Stuff and nonsense!"

She mourned his death in solitude for many months, and then her niece Marjory came to live with her. Marjory said that she wished to play whist. Mrs. Ingelby hesitated. Was it decent? As she was doing it merely to oblige the child, she decided that it was decent. She sent for the doctor to dine with her that night, and played whist afterwards until nearly eleven o'clock. She won ninepence, and went to bed triumphant. After that, the question of propriety was not raised again, and there was a whist-party every week. There was always someone in the village who could be asked to make a third at the table. As a matter of fact, she would far sooner have played with her own butler than not have played at all. In the game of cards her youth was renewed. The struggle for life was all over with her now, and she was in a quiet backwater of old age without temptations or ambitions, with no risks to take, and with nothing to scheme over. At the card-table the delightful struggle began again—she was once more in the full current, triumphing or vanquished.

Mrs. Ingelby walked with some slight difficulty, but without further support than her stick, into the drawing-room, followed by Marjory and the vicar. Mrs. Ingelby wore black silk and no jewels. She might have exchanged the lace on her dress for diamonds, and got some very fair diamonds for it, but she loved lace, and accused precious stones of vulgarity. Marjory, a girl of eighteen, wore grey and looked demure, but with humorous possibilities about her. She was quite the prettiest girl in the village, and fully aware of it. The vicar, who came last, was a pleasant and scholarly man. He preached good sermons and he liked good port. As an angler, his fame was great: the trout they had been eating at dinner had been the victims of his skill.

"How would it be," said Mrs. Ingelby, as if she were making an entirely new proposition, "if I were to take dummy?"

The idea was well received, as usual. "Then," said Mrs. Ingelby, as the maid placed the cushions in her chair for her, "shall we say threepenny points?"

It was, and had always been, threepenny

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points ; but it was just as well to mention it in case of accidents.

"Jane, have you placed the ash-tray and match-box for Mr. Vaughan?" Jane had, and having for the moment done all that she could, Jane retired, not to reappear until ten o'clock, when she brought in a tray, and Mrs. Ingelby took one glass of very weak whisky-and-soda, always under protest. These little things were arranged and fixed. The vicar and Marjory and Jane all knew their parts.

And now a silence reigned, and the battle raged on the green cloth. But to-night it could hardly be called a battle. The vicar and Marjory held all the cards. Mrs. Ingelby struggled hard but ineffectually ; no amount of skill could have saved her from defeat.

There was a pause at the end of the first rubber.

"The cards have been remarkable," said Mrs. Ingelby, "very remarkable. Very remarkable, indeed. This kind of thing cannot possibly continue, and so decided an inequality of fortune deprives the game of much of its interest, to my mind."

"Well, now, your revenge?" said Mr. Vaughan.

"Yes," said Mrs. Ingelby, "I think there will be time for it ; and, as I said, luck like yours cannot last. Two trebles and the rub. I think that's right. Marjory, it is your deal."

Then the terrible thing happened. Halfway through Marjory's deal Mrs. Ingelby stood up. "We will not continue this game," she said. "I am afraid I must believe the evidence of my own eyes. You are not dealing fairly. You are cheating!"

"Impossible!" said the vicar.

Marjory only said that she was sorry and blushed slightly.

"I think," said Mrs. Ingelby to Marjory, "you had better leave us. Go to your own room."

Without a word Marjory went out. It was extremely embarrassing for the vicar. He also had risen to go.

"Pray sit down again," said Mrs. Ingelby. "This is a serious matter. I hardly know what I should do."

"Can't understand it," said the vicar. "The girl wasn't playing for points ; and even if she had been, it was only the other day that you complained that she gave away her money as fast as she got it. Surely you must have made some mistake!"

"I made none. Apart from the fact that she did not deny it, I felt pretty sure that she had neutralised the cut. I know something of conjuring tricks myself. At each round my card fell from the bottom of the pack, and not from the top. It was done fairly well, and quickly ; but not quickly enough to deceive my eyes, old though they are."

"Then I'll tell you what," said the vicar. "It must have been done for a joke. I should say no more about it."

"On the contrary," said Mrs. Ingelby, "I shall say a great deal more about it. I trust that it was only a joke ; but Marjory must be made to understand that there are some subjects that do not admit of jokes, and that whist is one of them."

And then a tray was brought in, and Mrs. Ingelby said that she would not have any, thank you ; and Mr. Vaughan mixed it for her.

* * * * *

One afternoon in the following week, Marjory called at the Vicarage. Could the vicar come over and dine that night and play whist afterwards?

"Certainly!" said the vicar. "Delighted. Many thanks. And are you going to be allowed to be one of the whist-party, my dear?"

"Oh, yes!" she said. "I am entirely forgiven."

"Look here!" said the vicar. "I am not a curious man, as a rule, but I wish you'd tell me what on earth you did it for. By the way, I must return to your aunt the points that I received over that first rubber. I had forgotten that."

"Oh, no, you mustn't!" said Marjory. "I never cheated at all in the first rubber."

"Well," said the vicar, "this beats me. The luck was all with us, and you were doing splendidly. Why on earth should you——?"

"Don't you see?" Marjory broke in. "It was because the luck was all on our side. She manages herself beautifully, and doesn't complain much ; but if she hasn't won a game all the evening, she is perfectly miserable, and doesn't sleep all night. I was giving her the loveliest hand when she found me out. Spades would have been the trumps, and she had the four honours and a little one, and a long suit in diamonds. I have done it before often, and have never been found out."

"Well, you must have made your partner lose threepences."

"Yes," said Marjory cheerfully. "That

"Then the terrible thing happened."

doesn't matter a bit, does it? Whereas, if old ladies get upset and can't sleep, that is very bad for their health."

"And, naturally, when you told her this, she forgave you?"

Marjory's eyes opened wide. "Told her it? Told her that she'd been treated as a child and allowed to win? How could I, or anyone else, be so cruel? You must never breathe a word of it to her. I found she had decided to take it merely as a stupid joke, and to imagine that when the game was over I had intended to own up, anyhow. So that was how I left it."

"So you ask a man in my position to assist you in this fraud?"

"It's a pious fraud," said Marjory.

"Well, possibly I may. But what about to-night?"

"To-night," said Marjory, "will be just like the other nights. I shall play fairly for the first rubber. If my aunt loses that, I think her luck's very likely to improve afterwards. There are lots of ways of doing it, and I have been taught them all."

"Then," said the vicar, "you're a card-sharper, my dear; but I believe you're not such a bad sort of girl, in spite of it."

I HEAR.

THE Outer World is calling, calling; calling soft and low;
Whispering seductively of places that I know.
Along the Southern mainland, where the sea's alive with light,
The splendid, vibrant Tropics are calling through the night.

Although the muck around me—drabby sky and dirty rain—
Shrieks aloud, incessantly, of soul-destroying pain,
Far down the sounding halls of Space the Voice, above the din,
Calls: "Come away, my Brother; come wander with your kin."

Within my heart are ringing, ringing; ringing night and day,
Melodies of colour; symphonies in gold and grey—
Green brilliance in the water, purple shadows on the sand,
Pearly sky-line blending orange clouds and crimson land.

From overseas are calling, calling; calling down the wind,
Voices of the Wilderness (known only to their kind);
"Where green-and-purple shore-line dips into the opal foam,
"We await you, Little Brother, knowing you will come."

EDWIN WARREN GUYOL.

"SANCTUARY."

By CHARLOTTE MASON.

IN the darkest ages of heathenism, the law of sanctuary granted to malefactors—when in danger of the wrath of their fellow-men—a safe asylum, and no avenger dared drag a trembling fugitive from the horns of the heathen altars. Rome and Athens, Tyre and Sidon had their sanctuaries, and the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius granted the privilege to certain churches and their environs, and these privileged spots were regarded as fortresses; but much evil arose, and, as time went on, the refuges were filled with the worst criminals.

Photo by] [F. C. Gillespie.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

In England, the law of sanctuary was in favour from the most remote period. Dunwallo, a British prince, enacted laws by which not only the cities and temples of his heathen gods should enjoy the privilege of sanctuary, but also the highways and byways leading to them, so that evil-doers were counted safe even in the presence of their avengers.

The principle of the law of refuge was transferred to the Christian Church at a very early period of her history, under the name of "Right of Sanctuary," and was adopted by the Anglo-Saxons. King Lucius extended to Winchester Cathedral and its precincts this favour in the year A.D. 169, and in the ninth century several ecclesiastical sanctuaries were established.

Witlaf, King of Mercia, found an asylum for four months in the cell of St. Etheldreth, on the island of Crowland, in Lincolnshire, when in great danger from King Egbert, and he afterwards granted the privilege of sanctuary to the Abbey in A.D. 825.

The church of St. John of Beverley was thus privileged in the time of the Saxons by Athelstan, also the cathedral church of Ripon and St. Buryan in Cornwall, A.D. 935.

Edward the Confessor bestowed the same favour upon Ramsey Abbey and St. Peter's of Westminster. Later on, the privilege of sanctuary was granted especially to Worcester, Tintern, Hexham, Leominster, and finally from custom, "not always from legal right," many churches, cemeteries, and cloisters were looked upon by criminals, like the cities of refuge in the Israelitish days, as safe asylums from the vengeance of their foes. No doubt sanctuary was first suggested by the cities of refuge of the Levitical law, which were expressly appointed by God for the involuntary manslayer, and the altar of burnt-offerings was also a place of refuge for fugitives who had committed undesignedly lesser offences.

A few of the mediæval defences gifted with the privilege were made so by virtue of Royal charters, which also included the legal boundaries. In the cases of Ripon and Hexham, the right of sanctuary was extended by Athelstan over an area of one mile in every direction round the church. Stone crosses engraved with the word "Sanctuary" indicated the limits of the nunnery of Armethwaite in Cumberland, founded by William Rufus, and in the case of

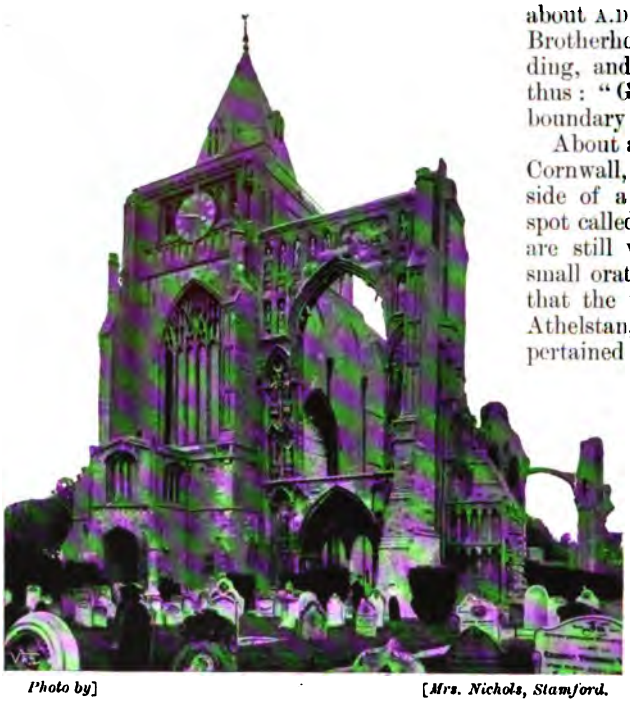


Photo by] [*Mrs. Nichols, Stamford.*

CROWLAND ABBEY.

Crowland Abbey the five rivers surrounding the island on which it originally stood were its asylum boundaries.

King Witlaf, in his charter, commanded that whoever in his kingdom was found guilty of any offence and was amenable to the laws for the same, if he should flee to this monastery, and in the presence of the abbot invoke the favour of the most holy confessor, St. Guthlac, he should be safe and secure under the protection of the abbot and his monks in whatever service they should employ him, in the whole island of Crowland, as though he were in an asylum or in the king's own chamber. Also, he made it lawful for all such fugitives to sail upon and to fish in the five rivers without challenge or molestation, and to dwell in safety within the spacious area of the sanctuary. To St. Guthlac, the confessor, is given the honour of the abbey's origin. He was the son of Perwald, a Mercian noble, who, having served in the army, retired and became a monk in his twenty-fourth year in the monastery of Repton, Derbyshire. His cross, erected about A.D. 730, still exists in a hamlet called Brotherhouse, between Crowland and Spalding, and bears an inscription which reads thus: "Guthlac has placed this stone for his boundary mark."

About a mile south-east of St. Buryan in Cornwall, on the farm of Bosliven, by the side of a gently running brook, is a little spot called "The Sanctuary." The remains are still visible of what may have been a small oratory, and it is far from improbable that the place is the original sanctuary of Athelstan, but the privilege of sanctuary pertained also to the church, the churchyard, the crosses, and a limited space beyond. The building appears to have been much larger than the other ancient chapels which still exist throughout Cornwall. The spot was rendered sacred by St. Buriana, a holy woman of Ireland who was held in such high veneration as a saint that Athelstan, after his conquest of the Scilly Islands, returned to fulfil a vow he had made at her shrine—that if God blessed him, he would raise a collegiate church on this ground; and returning from his victory in the year 930, he founded and endowed the church, dedicating it to St. Buriana as an act of gratitude to God. In the churchyard, near the south porch, stands an old cross on a flight of steps, locally known as "Athelstan's Cross." On one side of it is carved the figure of our Lord, and on the reverse are five bosses, symbolical of the five wounds in His body.

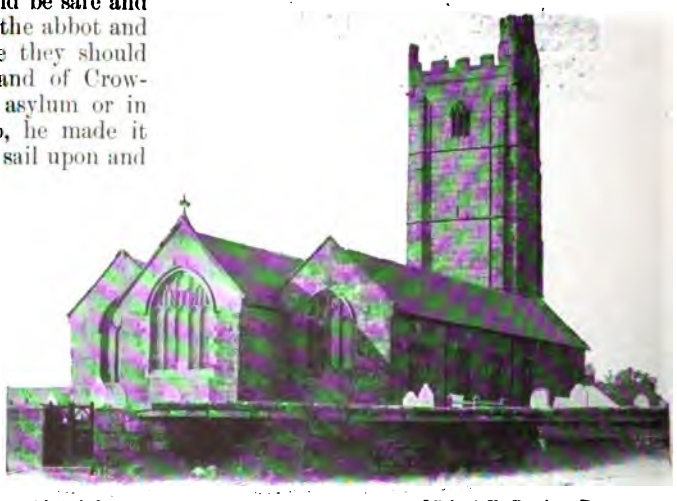


Photo by] [*Robert H. Preston, Penzance.*

ST. BURYAN CHURCH.

"THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM." FROM THE PICTURE BY F. AMERIGO.

A prisoner has escaped from the executioner while being led away in company with his wife and children. In the hands of the monks he is safe, and while the executioner would proceed to claim him in spite

Photo by] [*Rev. F. Partridge.*

BOUNDARY CROSS OF ST. CLETHER'S SANCTUARY.

The boundaries of the sanctuary of St. John of Beverley were indicated by crosses, three of which still exist. In the picturesque hamlet of Bishop Burton, a mile and a half from Beverley, stands the shaft of an old stone cross in a stone socket. It is called the "Stump Cross," and is one of the three sanctuary crosses on the left of the road leading to Beverley. This monastery was erected for the use of both sexes, but in 867 it was destroyed by the Danes. Athelstan confirmed the original foundation and added much land to the endowment. The church enjoyed the right of sanctuary until the Reformation, and in the minster, on a tablet, are recorded the traditional words of King Athelstan's grant. Athelstan was as great a patron of Beverley as St. John, who was brought up at the feet of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, and was taught the way of God more perfectly by Hilda, the pious abbess of Whitby. He restored the church, and founded a nunnery and endowed it. He was tutor to the Venerable Bede.

In the choir aisle of the minster, just outside the north aisle of the transept, is still preserved a rude stone chair of sanctuary, called the "Frith Stol," or seat of peace. Heavy fines were imposed on any person who dared to seize the fugitive; and when a criminal was once seated within the chair—the most sacred refuge for those who claimed the privilege of sanctuary—no money payment could free a man who violated it by laying hands on him. This venerable relic is rude and plain, and is, perhaps, earlier than any part of the existing church. There is no trace left of any inscription having been engraved on the chair, but according to some historians an inscription is preserved which is said to have existed, which runs thus: "Haec sedes lapidea Freedstool dicitur; i. e. pacis Cathedra, adquam reus fugiendo perveniens omnimodam habet securitatem."

The famed sanctuary chair or Frith-stol of the seventh century still stands to the south of the altar in the parish church of Hexham. It has the seat slightly hollowed out in a semicircular form, and is ornamented with patterns of Norman character. The original registry of criminals who sought refuge in the Beverley Frith-stol is preserved in the Lansdowne MSS. at the British Museum. These massive low stone seats are among the rarest antiquities

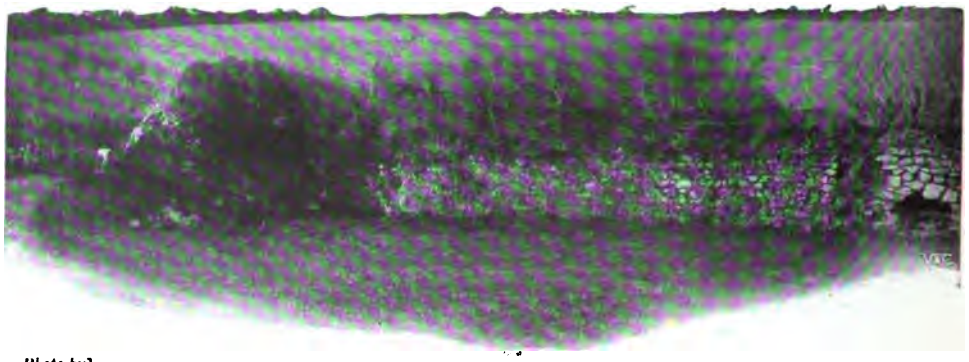
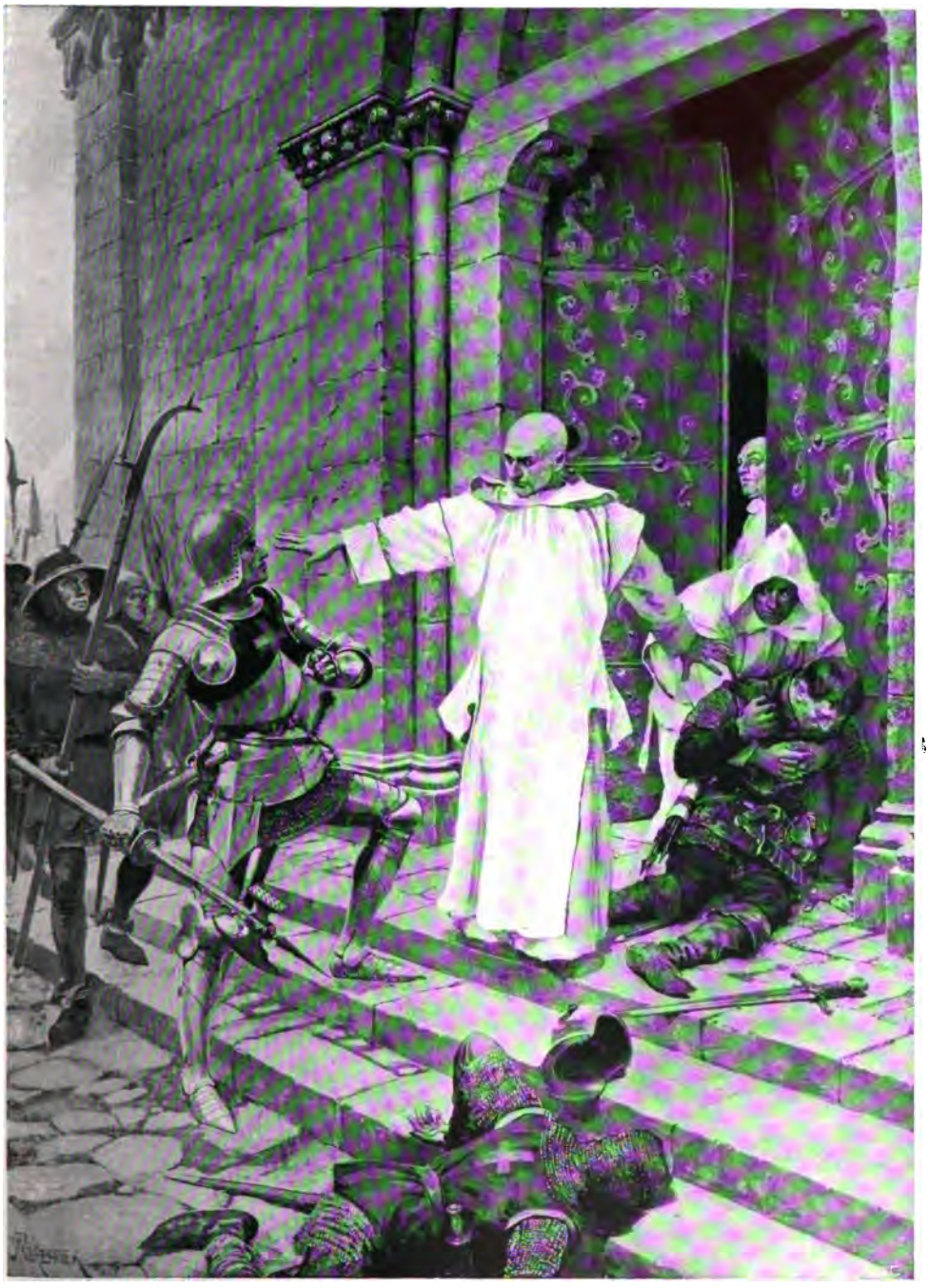


Photo by] [*Robert H. Preston, Penzance.*

"THE SANCTUARY," ST. BURYAN.



"SANCTUARY." FROM THE PICTURE BY A. FORESTIER.

in our churches, but Frith-stols still exist in other of our parish churches, as well as those of Hexham or Beverley. There is a good example of this seat of refuge on the north side of the altar in the church of Chewton Mendip, Somersetshire. It is built into the wall under one of the chancel windows, and stands about two feet from the floor. This sanctuary seat is hoary with age, rude and plain, without ornament of

any kind. A very singular stone chair which once possessed the right of sanctuary stands on the south side of the church of Sprotburgh, near Doncaster, close to the Copley pew. It is surrounded with grotesque sculptured figures, which are more or less obliterated by time or rough usage. It was dug up, a little beyond memory, in the churchyard, and has stood where it is now placed ever since. It is supposed to be of the thirteenth century. The carving on the front of the seat shows the outline of a human face with long beard, resembling the

Photo by [*Rev. W. G. Wigfall, Beverley Minster.*

"FRITH-STOL," BEVERLEY.

outspread tail of a bird; on each side of the head is a human leg.

Durham Cathedral can no longer show its Frith-stol, but among its records we find many particulars of criminals who sought sanctuary there. Those who were under the protection of the Church were furnished with a white wand as a sign that they had claimed sanctuary; occasionally they were secretly shipped off to foreign lands. Fugitives who had unwittingly committed offences fled to the churches, and if they could but reach the door of a religious house and knock, they were free from capital punishment. The porch in the north-east

Photo by [*S. and J. Govier, St. Buryan.*

ATHELSTAN'S CROSS, ST. BURYAN.

transept of Durham Cathedral forms the principal entrance to the church; on the door of the porch is the ancient knocker which was sounded in olden times by persons claiming the sanctuary of St. Cuthbert. The upper chamber over the porch

Photo by [*G. Pottinger.*

FRITH-STOL AT SPROTBURGH.

DURHAM SANCTUARY KNOCKER.

was always occupied by a monk, who listened for those claiming sanctuary. By touching this Norman bronze knocker they gained entrance to the altar-rails. It is a large,

Photo by] [*M. E. Arbuthnot.*

SANCTUARY KNOCKER IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, STRATFORD-ON-AVON

grotesque head, and in the grinning mouth hangs the ring. Originally the eyes were filled with crystals, "as small, claw-like pieces of bronze remain by which the filling was attached." The age of this old relic is the same as that of the doorway itself.

In the collegiate church of the Holy Trinity in Shakespeare's town is a sanctuary knocker. It is attached to the door of the north porch, and afforded protection to any seeking refuge in the church. As at Durham, directly the knocker was touched, the fugitive was considered safe from his pursuers. On the north door of the Norman church of St. Nicholas, in Gloucester, is one of these venerable relics. It has always been on the principal door of the church, and though the exact date cannot be fixed, it is supposed to be at least six hundred years old. There is a tradition that in the olden days there were pirates on the Severn who sometimes fled for sanctuary to St. Nicholas's Church. The handle is most curious; it represents a fiend bearing the soul of a witch to the infernal regions.

Photo by] *A. A. Pitcher.*

SANCTUARY KNOCKER AT ST. NICHOLAS'S CHURCH, GLOUCESTER.

The church of Little Maplestead, in Essex, is said to have enjoyed an especial right of sanctuary. A preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem was founded here by Juliana de Burgo in 1185, of which the church yet remains as a parish church. It is the smallest and latest of the four ancient circular churches still existing in England, the diameter of the round part being only twenty-six feet, and the whole length, including the chancel, little more than sixty feet. The church stands detached in the fields of the little village, which takes its name from the maple-trees once so abundant in the district.

Crosses on the road or without the limits

of the cemeteries were also endowed with the privilege of sanctuary. It was decreed that if anyone should fly to a cross on the road while pursued by his enemies, he should remain free, as in the church itself; also, if a condemned person should escape and take refuge in a church porch, or should cling to a cross fixed in the earth, lay justice should leave him in peace. These privileges attached to only certain of the innumerable crosses set up in this country; no place could enjoy the full right of sanctuary except by Royal grant. Doubtless, in early days, "a merciful and wise policy" multiplied these "cities of refuge," where safety was guaranteed to the criminal until his case was fairly investigated, and in those days the privilege was seldom violated by the barbarians of antiquity. In the churchyard of Doulting, Somersetshire, a sanctuary cross stands just opposite the north porch, the precincts of the church having enjoyed the privilege of asylum. It is a fourteenth century cross; the top is broken off; the shaft which remains is eight feet high, and stands on a stepped base eight feet four inches high. The shape of the steps is octagon. The carvings on the four sides of the plinth represent the emblems of the Passion. On the north side are the ladder, hammer, and pincers; on the south, the crown of thorns and spear; the cross and nails on the east; and the sceptre and whip on the west.

Well-chapels also had granted to them the right of sanctuary. The sacred sign gave the chosen place of a cross the semblance of sanctity, and from remote times special sanctity attached itself to springs of clear, bright water. Not far from the church of St. Clether in Cornwall, in a field called Chapel Park, stands a little chapel built of slate-stone with granite dressings. Its length is twenty-five feet, and its breadth sixteen feet. There is a west door of granite, and over it a stone window of two lights. To the south is one small, square-headed, single-light window. The little building was the cell or oratory of St. Clether, who fled for refuge from the Britons in Wales who had massacred most

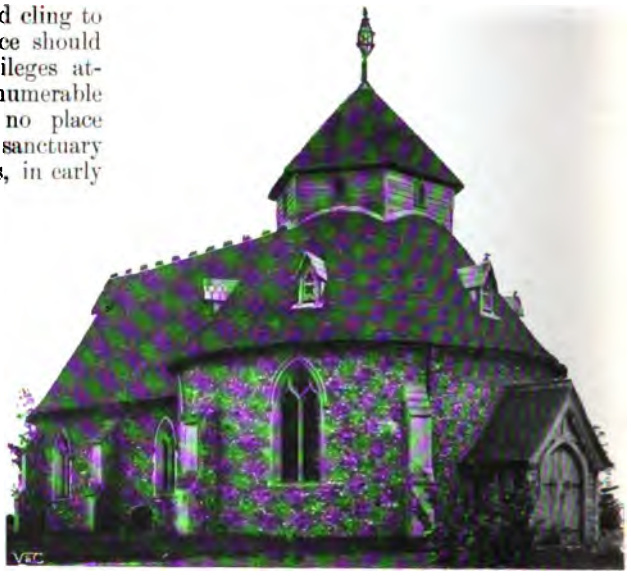


Photo by] [*Coles & Co., Halstead.*

ROUND CHURCH OF LITTLE MAPLESTEAD.

Photo by] [*Miss Hodges.*

DOULTING SANCTUARY CROSS.

"THE MOORISH CUSTOM OF SANCTUARY." FROM A DRAWING BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

According to a Moorish custom, if a man whom the avenger of blood is pursuing can reach the habitation of another tribe and touch one of their women on the breast with his lips, he becomes one of the tribe, and his new kinsmen are bound to defend him.

of his family, and, having lost his earthly kingdom, resolved to devote the rest of his life to the conversion of the pagans in North Cornwall. He settled in the Ynney Valley, where he found a clear spring of water, and there he built his hut and church. A tract around the old chapel is still called the "sentry" or sanctuary, and one of the venerable crosses that marked the bounds still remains. There are two holy wells, one at the north-east of the chapel, and the second under the altar.

The two most important places of sanctuary in London were the Sanctuary Tower, at Westminster, and the district of Whitefriars adjacent to the Temple, and bounded by Fleet Street and the river. Westminster Abbey shared the privilege of sanctuary with other great monasteries, and the name of Broad Sanctuary still survives to mark the site of what was formerly a Norman tower with two chapels and a belfry to call the refugees to service. An English king, Edward V., was born in this sanctuary, where his mother, Elizabeth Woodville, had taken refuge; and a few years later his brother and sister were brought hither in their mother's flight from the ambitious factions of the Duke of Gloucester.

Of Whitefriars as a sanctuary, under its cant name of "Alsatia," a vivid picture is given in Sir Walter Scott's "The Fortunes of Nigel." At the time when the novelist's hero sought refuge there (in the reign of James I.), this "Alsatia" had the privilege of a sanctuary "unless against the writ of the Lord Chief Justice or of the Lords of the Privy Council." And the place so abounded with desperadoes that it was unsafe for the officers of the law to execute warrants emanating even from the highest authority.

On the admission of fugitives into the strictly ecclesiastical sanctuaries, various ceremonies were observed. First they were led to the altar or the chair of asylum, and after sitting in the same were considered safe from the avenger. The criminals also had to take certain oaths, and their names were entered in the sanctuary register, after which they might consider themselves secure.

The privileges of sanctuary were limited by the Pope in 1503, at the request of Henry VII., and, being much abused, were almost extinguished by Henry VIII. In 1541, the law was practically abolished, and an order was given that all persons taking refuge within the walls of the legal sanctuaries should wear a badge of distinction, and should not leave their refuge before sunrise or after sunset. Finally, in 1623, the law was utterly abolished by an Act of James I., running thus: "Be it enacted by the authority of this Parliament that no sanctuary or privilege of sanctuary shall hereafter be admitted or allowed in any case." In Scotland, religious sanctuaries were abolished at the Reformation; but within the "grith" or asylum once belonging to the Abbey of Holyrood, and now attached to the Palace, debtors are safe from their creditors, and as within its limits Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Craggs are included, this refuge is both roomy and agreeable enough. It cannot, however, protect criminals.

Photo by] [*Rev. F. Partridge.*

CHAPEL OF ST. CLETHER.

A CAST IN THE DARK.

By HAMILTON DRUMMOND.

"AT my time of life," said Mr. Paulson, laying his long clay carefully on the table beside him, "and with such a record behind me, I think I can make an admission without risking my reputation?"

By implication the assertion was a question, and by implication the murmur which ran round the bar parlour was a sufficient reply. It meant, and Mr. Paulson so understood it, that his eminence as a thief-taker was a thing unique, remote, and unassailable, and though it might please Mr. Paulton to belittle himself, Market Danesfort was not deceived.

"Yes," he went on, settling his iron grey wig a little awry on his bald pate, for the night was warm, "I think I have earned my pension—four pound three and four a month, paid monthly, as Squire Cottlesford there very well knows. Eh, Squire? I have earned my pension too soundly—the Crown gives nothing for nothing, and very little for thirty-five years' service—not to be able to admit that the biggest catch of the many who came to my net was—was—let us say providential. Why—now, why—should a man be ashamed of confessing to a bit of good luck? Goodness knows, the outrageous digs that Fortune is so fond of giving need something to salve their hurt now and then. Of these—the jade's ill-natured jars, I mean, the traps that failed for no fault in the setting, and such-like—a man will talk for a month, and as if there was no luck in the world but ill luck. But that's the sign of a small man and a small mind, and I don't mind admitting that the nabbing of Moses Solomons was a pure piece of—of—providence. The way of it was this, and as, to be honest, I had so little to do with the planning, I'll tell the story as if I was not in it at all."

What Jonathan Wild had been in his last days, so was Moses Solomons from first to last—a master of thieves, a plotter of thefts, and a receiver of stolen goods. Was there a likely lad or lass who, having made one false step, was in doubt whether to go back or forward; to turn to an honest shilling a day with starved intervals, or follow the Tyburn road with a full stomach to comfort the journey? Moses Solomons resolved the doubt! Meat and drink for the day were near at hand, and Tyburn was far off! Was there a bold spirit whose nimble fingers lacked employment? Moses Solomons was the friend of labour; and when the nimble fingers had filled the pockets, Moses Solomons was the man to empty them, all in the way of trade. None of these services were for nothing. Even the philanthropist must live, and, as a Jew versed in the law of his nation, Moses Solomons knew it was a sin to muzzle the ox that treaded out the corn. Apprentice rogue and master rogue must alike pay their fees, and when it came to stolen goods, why, the risk was the receiver's, and that he who ran the risk should reap the profit was plain sense.

But just as the works of a clock turn the hands and yet are modestly hidden, so did Moses Solomons shun self-advertisement; or, rather, he was the general whose brain conceived the plan of battle into the strife of which he never thrust himself. For him the glory of the notorious scoundrel had no allurements, but he took pains to see that his two-thirds of the profits were duly paid! Not that he was a niggard where the laying out of a guinea would bring him back ten, and many a man had cause to look upon Moses Solomons' generosity with rueful remembrance.

In such a trade there was a natural tendency—common to all trades—for tools to wear out. Dulness and rust curse more than steel, and when these showed themselves Moses Solomons followed everyday law and flung them aside. Let a chisel lose temper and spoil good work, and a wise master-carpenter will choose a new one, especially if chisels are to be had for nothing. Life is too short for a skilled workman to waste time and material over a faulty tool! In this no blame should attach to Moses Solomons, since in the struggle of life there is no room for the used-up or the incompetent. Yet to say he flung his worn-out tools aside is unjust, for in the strict letter of truth *he hung them up*. It was curious how suddenly at times the full stomach found Tyburn.

Naturally these broken implements of trade had to be replaced, and the brutal

folly of the law saw to it that there was no lack of material. Let Moses Solomons' agents—drabs for the most part, and one or two oiled and dandified male ruffians to catch the foolish girls—let them haunt the discharge door of Clerkenwell prison not oftener than once a month, and he would still have labour enough and to spare. There it was that Nicholas Dick was netted.

"What, now, is your line?" asked Moses, as the two sat face to face across a filthy deal table in the room behind the Jew's shop in the Minories. "Let every tool do its own work, that's what I say, and so, what's your line? Never fear but I'll set you on fortune's road. To help the deserving poor is what I live for, young man, to help the deserving poor."

"Never mind what my line was, master," answered Nick. "I'm out of it now for good and all, and beginning afresh. Any work a man can live by, that's my line."

"Ah!" and the Jew ran his eyes yet again over his visitor, as if appraising his bone, muscle, sinew, and possible brain; which, indeed, was exactly what he was doing. The fool was evidently honest, and with so much rascally material ready-made to his hand to be had for the asking, it was always doubtful whether the labour of turning him into a rogue would be profitable. But, unfortunately for himself, Nicky Dick was of a rare and useful type. Shrewd of eye, firm of mouth, alert, tall and powerful, he was a man after Moses Solomons' own heart, and as the Jew counted the value of his points he loved him—all in the way of business!

"Ah!" he said again, "work a man can live by? Better see Molly Baines—she who brought you here—Red Moll, we call her. She'll talk it over with you. I never speak of these things—at least, not at first. Best see what Moll has to say, young man; she's upstairs."

But what Moll had to say was soon said, and it may be she did not use circumlocution enough, for in three minutes back came Nicky Dick in such hot haste that he strode down the crazy stairs three at a time.

"Ye blackguard thief!" he cried, knocking aside the stool he had just risen from, and flourishing his clenched fists in the air as he leaned across the table. "Ye Jew rogue! Ye slimy, sneaking swindler!" But Moses Solomons was undisturbed. Firm in his self-esteem, no abuse could touch him. As for threats, he was as free from cowardice as he was from scruple, and if he lived upon the thievings of others rather than his own, it was because fifty busy hands paid him better than two.

"No, no, no," he began softly; then in a flash he leaned forward, squaring his elbows on the table, and his black eyes as full of rage and fire as Nicky Dick's grey ones. "Ye prison scum! Ye plucked nightbird! You, with the stink of the gaol fresh on you, you to talk to Moses Solomons that fashion! Rogue and thief in your teeth!"

"No thief, master; I leave that to you."

"Gaol-bird, then."

"A man may be laid by the heels and yet be honest."

"What? Suffering innocence!" and the Jew laughed. "Stick to the pretty tale, my son, and see who'll believe in your Clerkenwell honesty!"

"I'll stick to the truth, then; all I did was——"

"Keep it for the next corner, my lad! When I want the tale told, I'll ask for it. My word on it, next time I ask for it you'll speak and be thankful. There is the door, and here is Moses Solomons—do you go your way or do you bide? That's the question."

"My own way," answered Nicky promptly, turning on his heel as he spoke, "and the sooner the better."

"Right! for the sooner you go, the sooner you'll be back. Wait a minute, though, till I size you up. There you are, Nicky Dick, country-bred, and with no friend in all London. Ah! you stare, but it's part of my trade to judge a man. Your pasty face is prison air, while your coarse skin tells of sun, rain, and wind; therefore Nicky Dick is country-bred. Nicky Dick has gone wrong in the country—Suffolk for choice. Ha, ha! I thought that was a Suffolk note—and for very shame's sake Nicky Dick dare not show face at home nor within twenty miles of it. The gaol's the gaol, d'ye see, and the taint clings. London's the place for the like of Nicky Dick, for, says he to himself, where a man is one of a million there are fewer questions asked. That's where Nicky Dick is a fool and doesn't know life. All that's past; now for the present. Nicky Dick hasn't a stiver in his pocket. How should he? In all these months the rogues have been too much for the honest man, and that's the truth all the world over if the rogues have but honest men's brains. At Clerkenwell they give a man no breakfast on the day of discharge, fresh air and the streets are breakfast enough. Nicky Dick is hungry, and in two hours Nicky Dick will be starving; which brings us to the future. London's

the place! Aye, I saw by your face that hit told, and you're right enough, my lad. London's the place for a shamed rogue to hide, a rogue who daren't show his face in honest Suffolk; but if ye think London's going to feed the rogue on honest bread, your starved stomach will cry 'Liar!' on you till your very soul's sick. Aye, aye, I know; you've hands, but who'll trust them, gaol smell and all? There are enough honest folk in London for London's honest work, without muck-raking the gaols, Master Nicky, and that you'll find. Listen, now, and lay this to heart, for it's more truth than you've heard in a twelvemonth. To-day you'll starve, to-morrow you'll beg and think shame of it, the day after you'll beg again and think no shame. The next step's a short one. Respect's gone, d'ye see; and on the fourth day you'll come to Moses Solomons, whining, cringing, with your tail tucked under like a whipped cur, and Moses Solomons will give you work. Jew thief! Jew rogue! Well, well, I'll bear you no malice for these so long as you serve me well. 'Twas your folly that spoke, and serve me you shall. There's your future, Nicky Dick; now will you go and starve, or bide and——? Go? Then begone, you miching rogue! you sneaking gaol-scum! begone and starve sense into your skull, for it has sore need of it. I said four days, but you're obstinate, so I give you a week, you crabbed, sullen, sour-tempered dog!"

It says much for Moses Solomons' virile personality that his gibes and flouts earned in reply nothing worse than scowls. So far as sheer strength went, the Suffolk yeoman could have crushed the life out of the Hebrew prophet inside of ten minutes, and both knew it. But, for all their knowledge, the one was unafraid, and it never seriously entered into the other's mind to try conclusions with the mocking, masterful rogue who so freely jeered him from behind the dirty table.

"'Ye blackguard thief!' he cried."

That Moses Solomons' forecast was true is also to his credit, but is less remarkable. As he himself said, it was his trade to know men, honest men as well as rascals, and he had not lived eight-and-thirty years in London without learning that a great city is, to the unvouched poor and needy at least, the most heartless and most sceptical place on God's earth. What he had predicted came true almost to the letter, though the tale of Nicky Dick's ten days' struggle with the hardness of the world's belief is a story by itself. That it was ten days and not the bare week was the Jew's sole failure, and the slip was no great blemish, for of all things under the sun the hardest to gauge is a man's physical endurance.

"Thou hast kept me waiting, Master Nick," was the welcome Solomons gave him on the day of his shamefaced and unwilling return, "but I like thee none the worse for that; nay, the better rather. That a man should make a bold fight and know he's beaten, fair and square, shapes for peace at the last. What's hard earned commonly sticks, is as true of men as of guineas. Now, my man, go your way upstairs to Molly Baines, and when you're fed, clothed, and groomed we'll have a talk. No man does good work unless he respects himself, and that's not when he has slept in the gutter for seven nights at a stretch."

"Respect myself?" groaned Nicky, with a bitter recollection of how he had gone under in the fight, and how vilely low he had fallen. "God help me! that'll never be again."

"Bah! I know better. Why, man, inside of an hour you won't so much as own knowledge of the dirty wretch who last night scavenged the slums for garbage."

And again Moses Solomons was right. The Nicky Dick of the sated hunger and spruce clothing had nothing, save in name, in common with the debased object of the early morning. But though the change wrought was as great within as without, he had learned his lesson, and was no Jeshurun to wax fat and kick. Having sold himself, he made delivery with a good grace, and frankly confessed Moses Solomons as master and owner.

"Now, then, and for the second time," began the Jew, "remember what I said—to every tool his work. What's your line?"

"Farmer," answered Nicky Dick shortly. He was thinner skinned over the past than over the future, and the looking back galled him, for it showed what he had lost.

"Bah! that's on the straight and done with; I mean on the crooked."

"Farmer," answered Nick again, "and nothing crookeder than a trifle of horse-coping. But we all do that when we get the chance—lord, parson, and yokel. I think it's in the smell of the beast."

"That's very well," retorted Solomons, "but a trifle of horse-coping does not bring a man to Clerkenwell."

"Clerkenwell? Um!—ah!—as to Clerkenwell, it was like this. There was a girl, d'ye see, and another fellow, and a bout of cudgel play, and—and——"

"A warm crack for him and a cool cell for you! And was that all?"

"All, on my word, and too much," answered Nicky Dick, ruefully remembering where it had landed him.

"What!" and the Jew rolled back in his chair shaking with a gust of laughter. "My word! Master Nick, but I bought you cheap. Why, where's the shame of prison for breaking a head? The girl would have loved you the better for it. By Micah the Prophet! was there ever such a fool?"

"Ah! but," answered Nicky, his face growing red and sheepish for all the broad inches of the man, "the girl rounded on me, slobbering over him and railing at me as if we were Cain and Abel, and—and—the story's out, so now let's have no more of it."

Moses Solomons took the hint. He is a fool workman who rusts his own tools, and whatever names the world might call the Jew, it never called him fool. Thenceforward the past was past, dead and buried, with a decent green sod smoothed above it, and neither one nor other who knew what was hidden went poking at its mouldered bones.

Three years they worked together, these two; three years, in which Nicky Dick's early knowledge of horseflesh was put to curious and exhaustive uses. In these years the Jew grew richer, bolder, and more rascally; but, do what it would, the law could never find him on any other but the sunny side of the hedge. That he was a shadow-prowler the law knew well enough; but knowledge is not proof, and however Moses' tools might be hung up out of use, the master-craftsman went on his way serenely, or at least as serenely as a dogged chase on a cold scent will allow.

As for Nicky, he made money and spent money after the fashion of his kind, and though his pocket was rarely empty, it had never more coin in it than his palm could scatter.

Naturally his business lay in the Home Counties; rather than in London, where a tight seat in the saddle and a devil-may-care turn for speed are of little use. It was, therefore, no surprise to Nicky to have his *rendezvous* laid at the "White Horse," in Dunsfold village, thirty-six miles from Bow Bells as the crow flies, and another score, or a bit over it may be, by the road a shrewd bird of another feather thinks it wise to travel. To a good horse it was no more than a day's hard work; but, not knowing what strain on his beast's four legs lay at the end of the journey, he spent thrice that time on the road, and so drew rein under the creaking signboard as fresh as new paint, and fit for whatever business Moses Solomons had on hand.

"The snort of a frightened horse."

That he was expected was plain, and from the obsequious greetings showered upon him he judged that the hold which his worthy patron had upon Master Landlord was a tight one, and said as much when, having seen to his mare's stabling, he sat at supper with Moses Solomons in the one private room of the inn.

"Nor would I trust him over much," he added. "The fellow has as evil a face under his great skull as ever I saw in my life."

"Trust's dead—bad Faith killed him," answered Moses, parodying the notice which hung above the fireplace. "The rascal could hang us both, and would, but that he'd hang alongside. My word! but when my day comes, there'll be a pretty fluttering of rookeries! Bow Street would give three thousand guineas down for what's written plain out in Moses Solomons' papers, and make money out of the rewards! My rogues know it, and that's my hold. If I go, they go! A score of them, or more. Trust no man—that's my rule, Nicky—neither love, friendship, nor gratitude. Get a man under heel and let him see you can push him lower, then trust him the length of your leg."

"What!" cried Nicky, "a biography of crooks?"

"You've hit it, my lad," answered his patron, grinning, "a crook's biography, with enough document attached to hang some of 'em ten times if they'd as many necks to stretch. So you see that, after all, it's love that holds me safe; but self-love, and not love for Moses Solomons."

"And am I——?" began Nicky, his face darkening; "but no, you can at least trust me, Solomons?'

"I trust you more than most," answered the Jew, still laughing, though his alert eyes keenly noted the other's changing face. "I trust you on long jobs such as to-night, when you could fill your own pockets and I be none the wiser; but when it comes to his life, Nicky Dick, Moses Solomons trusts no man."

"Then I'm there with the rest?"

"Tut, man! what odds if you are? Who suffers? And—and—it's a good thing to remember," added the Jew significantly.

"All right, I'll remember; no fear but I'll remember. But about my own business? You said to-night? You've work on hand?"

"In an hour, and the simplest thing in

life. Listen now, and I'll explain. It's a neat scheme and without risk."

"Good! Only another coil of the net for Nicky Dick. Well, I'll leave liquor aside till all's over. Fire away with your scheme. I suppose, they can't hang me twice, for all your precious biography?"

"There, there, forget that, man, and——"

"Forget it? Why, a minute back you said remember, and—but what's the plant?"

From an inside pocket Moses Solomons drew a roll of paper which he flattened out upon the table. It was a roughly drawn sketch map of that section of Surrey, a skeleton showing certain main limbs and ignoring all that was unessential to the purpose in hand.

"Here," said he, setting his finger on a few crosses in one angle of the paper, "are we in Dunsfold. Two miles on is Hascombe, and three or four further is Godalming, with a ridge and a big stretch of timber between the two, through which the road cuts. There is no moon, and under the trees, d'ye see, it's as dark as pitch, a proper night and a proper place for a game of high toby, though, for that matter, this is no high toby job. Our man is bound from Horsham to Godalming, so that—see, here it is—his road joins ours at Hascombe. He rides alone and is in the deuce of a hurry, as I've reason to know. Is that plain?"

Plain enough—so plain that Nicky Dick was content to nod without a comment. As to the truth of the details, he never so much as dreamt of questioning them. It was Moses Solomons' business to know, and that was enough, for Moses Solomons was no botch.

"Now listen to this," the Jew went on, "for the plan is cut and dry, and there's no need of talk. When I've thought a thing out, I want no Nicky Dick to mend it with his 'ifs' and 'buts' and 'maybes.' You ride through Hascombe and pull up t'other side of the ridge. Leave your barkers behind; this is a special job, and there's no need of them. In their place you'll carry a coil of rope and a sack. Beyond the ridge draw the rope across the road so that it swings clear of the mare's ears, but don't strain it overmuch, lest the jerk pitch the poor devil clear into the next world. We none of us want to die by a rope, do we, Nicky? And, my word for it! he'll be riding such a pelt that if the rope is not a bit slack, you'll kill him, sure. For the rest, bundle him into the sack and have him here as hard as you can ride. Again, now, is that plain?"

To the iteration of the question Nicky Dick gave no more answer than at first, but for a different reason. Then it had been confidence in Moses Solomons, now it was a cautious weighing of the Jew's scheme. He might swallow his patron's facts unwinkingly, but this was theory, and theory is a plank that must stand some testing if a man is to risk his life upon it.

"Suppose it is the wrong man?"

"Bah! how many ride from Hascombe to Godalming after dark and inside of half an hour—for I fix him to the very half-hour? Have the rope on a slip, and if there be more than one, let it go. Trust Moses Solomons, the man who rides alone is our man."

"Trust Moses Solomons? Why not trust Nicky Dick?"

"Because I can help myself, and you can't. Let that be; why run against a stone wall? Is the scheme plain?"

"Plain enough," answered Nicky thoughtfully. "Since time's a point, when do I start?"

Moses drew a serviceable, stout-cased silver watch from his fob; no gold toys for him, they provoked questions.

"Horsham to Rudgwick and so on to Hascombe is—h'm—allowing—yes, you've half an hour, and another half hour to cross the ridge; that'll give you fifteen minutes to set the trap."

"Why!" said Nicky; "'tis clockwork!"

"Aye, he rides by clockwork, for he has a time to keep. No more liquor? You're right. There's no trade where temperance counts more for a long life than ours. I've known more sudden deaths come of—but that's neither here nor there. You've half an hour."

"And more than enough!" answered the other moodily, and setting himself to fill his pipe. "I hate waiting, and ten minutes will see the mare ready."

In the silence the minutes dragged slowly. The Jew had no mind to talk, lest words should dull the sharpness of the scheme in the other's brain; as for Nicky Dick, supper had given him more to think about than was pleasant, and the longer he brooded, the sourer his mind grew.

It was a relief to them both when the master-craftsman shuffled to his feet with just the suggestion of ostentatious noise.

"Time up!" he said briskly. "You should be back here inside of two hours, or two and a half at most. The shares are the same as usual."

It was characteristic of their relationship that Nicky Dick had never so much as

"With a jerk shot the contents out into the focus of light."

touched upon the point. In crowns and guineas, at least, these two could trust one another. Nor was there any further talk until in the weed-grown, cobble-paved yard, Nicky asked Master Host for a long sack with a feed tied up in the bottom.

"What the plague d'ye want wi' such a thing as that? Why, 'tis ten times too big!"

"Happen a thing's of use though it's empty," answered Nick, tying the sagging bundle comfortably in front of him, using for the purpose the last six feet of the rope that were not tucked inside to keep the corn company. "Happen you may even want that big head of thine, for all that it's ten parts empty," and so rode off into the night.

There was no moon as yet, and though the sky was passably clear, the road showed no better than a feeble blur upon the darkness, a blur that was swiftly swallowed up in the black void of the world. In such a night his mare had more sense than himself, and it was with an easy mind that Nicky sent her down the blur at a comfortable trot. If there were danger in the way, even so little as comes from a fallen bough or a broken-wheeled chaise, her eyes, ears, and nose might be trusted to warn him in ample time. He had, therefore, leisure to give his thoughts a free run, and found their coursing cold sport.

Still, so engrossing were these thoughts that two things escaped him—one, that the mare, left very much to herself, had turned the comfortable trot to something quicker, and was covering the ground as if she made straight for the corn-bin; and, second, that on the near side of Hascombe a horseman passed him, pounding the highway at even a harder rate than he himself. Yet upon these two unnoted things hung life and death.

Moses Solomons meant no mischief, he told himself—no, of that he was sure; but all the same, let Moses Solomons die of the small-pox, or get nabbed through some petty oversight, some false reckoning in his astuteness, and where would Nicky Dick be? Three parts through to Tyburn, with the fourth part a clear road! No, the Jew meant no mischief, but as Nicky clattered through Hascombe—the merest straggle of houses, with a faint light here and there like the sparse stars of a stormy night—he told himself that he owed his patron no gratitude, no, nor loyalty. Fair dealings he should have, of course, fair as between man and man. For all his trade, Nicky was honest in his own fashion. Fair dealings, then, but no more. If aught went wrong with Moses Solomons, Nicky Dick would swing; well, sauce for goose was sauce for gander, and if aught went wrong with Nicky Dick, Moses Solomons would find it was a poor rule that wouldn't work both ways. All of which meditation brought Nicky to the rise north of Hascombe, and as he felt the upward slope of the road under the mare's feet he pulled her to a halt.

"Let's see," he muttered, talking to himself for company's sake as he looked round him in the mirk, "the Horsham road comes in at Hascombe, so that my gentleman must needs pass this way. Beyond the ridge, said Moses, but why beyond the ridge? Tell me that, lass. Some spot has caught his fancy, mayhap; but where will I get a snugger spot than this? 'Tis the saving of a climb up and a climb back, and a ghost's walk for quietness. What better is there beyond the ridge—aye, or as good? But that's Solomons' way. He'll fix things to a hair's breadth for a man, and never set a hand to them himself. Moses or no Moses, here's my spot for the trap, and be hanged to the ridge!"

The setting was no long job. On both sides of the road were trees enough for choice, and all he had to do was loop the rope across; Fortune, for all her blindness, would see to the rest. Hitching his horse to a convenient gate, Nicky Dick set briskly to work, calculating the curve of the droop with nice skill. Then he climbed to the top bar of the gate and, with his back to the post and his mare's muzzle within reach of his hand, waited.

Not for long. These three years of country work had put an edge upon his hearing, and through the stillness of the night, far off, dull and muffled, blurred as it were by the bulk of leafage which lay between, he caught the *pa-lop, pa-lop, pa-lop* of a horse ridden in hard haste. Gripping the top bar with both hands, Nicky caught his heels behind the second rail and swung forward, listening intently. *Pa-lop, pa-lop, pa-lop* rang the music nearer and clearer.

"That's on the branch road," muttered Nicky Dick, "and that, aye, hark to the clink of the cobbles, that's Hascombe. My word! but Moses is a miracle, a miracle, no less! Here's this fellow, riding from the deuce knows where, stopping here for dinner, there for supper, and for a glass of ale between times, yet Moses says at such an hour he'll be between Hascombe and God-alming, and on the tick of time up he comes smiling! My faith! friend, if you knew what hung there in the dark, you'd slacken

pace a bit ! Softly, lass ! tst, tst, tst ! quiet, mare, quiet ! a whinny might play the deuce ! quiet, I say, quiet, there's a good girl ! Heavens ! what a tearing hurry he's in ! 'Tis ten to one we have him—twenty, fifty, a hund—ha ha ! Nailed ! nailed ! "

Out of the darkness came a cry, part gasp, part groan ; the snort of a frightened horse and the jar of its hoofs scraping the stones as it staggered under a sudden involuntary jerk ; then a thud upon the roadway, and a rattling gallop over the hill and into silence.

Springing down, Nicky Dick groped in the dust a yard or two on the Hascombe side of the snare and presently found what he sought, an inert but breathing body huddled in a heap where the tension of the rope had flung it. Turning the trapped quarry on his back, Nicky peered into his face, but the gloom and the heavy coating of dust baffled him. Set tinder glowing to gratify his curiosity he dared not, so, drawing the wide sack over the fellow's feet, he inched him into its depths and flung the whole sprawling across his mare's withers. To untie the rope and climb into the saddle was a short labour, and half an hour under his time he was jogging back to the "White Horse."

That the windows of the inn were black dark was nothing. Moses Solomons, because of his special and peculiar knowledge, could trust the landlord ; but supposing he had no hanging grip on the drawers and wenches, it was natural he should bargain for lights out in the passages. Nicky, therefore, still whistling gaily, hitched the mare to the hook on the left of the open door, gripped the mouth of the sack and transferred its weight from her back to his own. Into the narrow, sanded hall he stumbled and up the creaking stairs, his burden groaning dismally with returning life the while. The passage above was like the passage below, flat dark, nor from top to bottom was there a sound of life except that which came from the tense sack where Nicky could feel the uneasy beginnings of vigour stirring on his back. With his best caution he fumbled his way to the door of the room where he and Moses Solomons had so lately supped, and to his great satisfaction found it on the swing. At a touch it flew back, and again there was a vault of blackness, so thick that it seemed to strike him a buffet on the face, for he fairly staggered as he crossed the threshold.

"Plague take it, Solomons ! " he cried, "here at least you might show a man a glim. Give us light, can't you, give us light ! "

As he ended, he heard the soft snick of the door closing behind him, and, as if the sound were a signal, out there flashed a dozen lanterns, all centred upon where he stood, and over every glare there was a pistol mouth. One glance he shot round the room ; then he let the sack tumble with a thud upon the floor.

"Trapped ! " he cried, and with a nerve that did him credit he turned to the writhing bundle behind him and gripped the bottom corners of the sack. "At least we'll see what for," and with a jerk shot the contents out into the focus of light.

For an instant he stood silent ; but as the body rolled sluggishly round and turned upon its back, his jaw slackened and he went back a step.

"Moses Solomons ! " he cried, staring. "Why, how—— ? " and then he laughed.

It was Moses Solomons sure enough, dusty and begrimed from head to foot, his ruffles torn, his coat rent from shoulder to elbow, blood on cheek and forehead, and broad scores across his face, as if from a dozen cat's claws, but the Jew himself in spite of filth and tatters.

"Moses Solomons ! " cried Nicky again. "How the plague came he here ? " Then the bitter memory of a certain callous record flashed into his mind. Straightening himself, he looked round the ring of life that girdled them both. "Swing us up together," he said ; "and if you want more proof than you've got, ask Nicky Dick for it."

"That's the story, gentlemen. For all his 'cuteness, Moses Solomons could not shuffle himself clear of *that* coil, and 'twas the biggest catch of my life."

"But how the plague came he there ? " asked the burly squire, from the depths of his ingle-chair.

"Ah ! that's what Nicky said ; and the answer was this. The fellow that Nicky met as he rode first through Hascombe brought a warning. The traps were on him, and, like the prompt rogue he was, Moses Solomons trusted no man to give the warning save himself, and so rode hot-hoofed after Nicky. The trap was to be on the further side of the ridge, but Nicky set it at the foot of the rise, and so caught himself and the master-craftsman in the one snare."

"And the pair of rogues ? "

"Tyburn, squire, Tyburn ; and more's the pity, for Nicky Dick was a straight man, for all his crookedness."

THE RED MARK.

By ISRAEL ZANGWILL.*

A CURIOUS episode in the London Ghetto the other winter, while the epidemic of small-pox was raging, escaped the attention of the reporters, though in the world of the Board-schools it is a vivid memory. But even the teachers and the committees, the inspectors and the Board members, have remained ignorant of the part little Bloomah Beckenstein played in it.

But to explain how she came to be outside the school gates instead of inside them, we must go back a little and explain her situation both outside and inside her school.

Bloomah was probably "*Blume*," which is German for a flower, but she had always been spelt "Bloomah" in the School Register, for even Board-school teachers are not necessarily familiar with foreign languages.

They might have been forgiven for not connecting Bloomah with blooms, for she was a sad-faced child, and even in her tenth year showed deep, dark circles round her eyes. But they were beautiful eyes, large, brown, and soft, shining with love and obedience.

Mrs. Beckenstein, however, found neither of these qualities in her youngest born, who seemed to her entirely sucked up by the school.

"In my days," she would grumble, "it used to be God Almighty first, your parents next, and school last. Now it's all a red mark first, your parents and God Almighty nowhere."

The red mark was the symbol of punctuality, set opposite the child's name in the Register. To gain it, she must be in her place at nine o'clock to the stroke. A moment after nine, and only the black mark was attainable. Twenty to ten, and the duck's egg of the absent was sorrowfully inscribed by the Recording Angel, who in Bloomah's case was a pale pupil-teacher in eyeglasses.

But it was the Banner which loomed largest on the school horizon, intensifying Bloomah's anxiety and her mother's grievance.

"I don't see nothing," Mrs. Beckenstein iterated; "no prize, no medal—nothing but a red mark and a banner."

The Banner was indeed a novelty. It had not unfurled itself in Mrs. Beckenstein's young days, nor even in the young days of Bloomah's married brothers and sisters.

As the worthy matron would say: "There's been Jack Beckenstein, there's been Joey Beckenstein, there's been Briny Beckenstein, there's been Benjy Beckenstein, there's been Ada Beckenstein, there's been Becky Beckenstein, God bless their hearts! and they all grew up scholards and prize-winners and a credit to their Queen and their religion without this *meshuggas* (madness) of a Banner."

Vaguely Mrs. Beckenstein connected the degenerate innovation with the invasion of the school by "furriners"—all these hordes of Russian, Polish, and Roumanian Jews flying from persecution, who were sweeping away the good old English families, of which she considered the Beckensteins a shining example. What did English people want with banners and such-like gewgaws?

The Banner was a class trophy of regularity and punctuality. It might be said metaphorically to be made of red marks; and, indeed, its ground-hue was purple.

The class that had scored the highest weekly average of red marks enjoyed its emblazoned splendours for the next week. It hung by a cord on the class-room wall, amid the dull, drab maps—a glorious sight with its oaken frame and its rich-coloured design in silk. Life moved to a chivalrous music, lessons went more easily, in presence of its proud pomp: 'twas like marching to a band instead of painfully plodding.

And the desire to keep it became a passion to the winners; the little girls strained every nerve never to be late or absent; but, alas! some mischance would occur to one or other, and it passed, in its purple and gold, to some strenuous and luckier class in another section of the building, turning to a funeral-banner as it disappeared dismally

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through the door of the cold and empty room.

Woe to the late-comer who imperilled the Banner. The black mark on the Register was a snowflake compared with the black frown on all those childish foreheads. As for the absentee, the scowls that would meet her return not improbably operated to prolong her absence.

"'Bloomah.' At home she was the girl-of-all-work."

Only once had Bloomah's class won the trophy, and that was largely through a yellow fog which hit the other classes worse.

For Bloomah was the black sheep that spoilt the chances of the fold—the black sheep with the black marks. Perhaps those great rings round the eyes were the black marks incarnate, so morbidly did the poor child grieve over her sins of omission.

Yet these sins of omission were virtues of commission elsewhere; for if Bloomah's desk was vacant, it was only because Bloomah was slaving at something that her mother considered more important.

"The Beckenstein family first, the workshop second, and school nowhere," Bloomah might have retorted on her mother.

At home she was the girl-of-all-work. In the living-rooms she did cooking and washing and sweeping; in the shop above, whenever a hand fell sick or work fell heavy, she was utilised to make buttonholes, school hours or no school hours.

Bloomah was likewise the errand-girl of the establishment, and the portress of goods to and from the tailoring houses, and the watch-dog when Mrs. Beckenstein went shopping or pleasuring.

"Lock up the house!" the latter would cry, when Bloomah tearfully pleaded for that course. "My things are much too valuable to be locked up. But I know you'd rather lose my jewellery than your precious Banner."

When Mrs. Beckenstein had new grandchildren—and they came frequently—Bloomah would be summoned in hot haste to the new scene of service. Curt post-cards came on these occasions, thus conceived—

"DEAR MOTHER,—A son. Send Bloomah.—BRINY."

Sometimes these messages were mournfully inverted—

"DEAR MOTHER, — Poor little Rachie is gone. Send Bloomah to your heart-broken

"BECKY."

Occasionally the post-card went the other way—

"DEAR BECKY, — Send back Bloomah.

"Your loving MOTHER."

The care of her elder brother Daniel was also part of Bloomah's burden; and in the evenings she had to keep an eye on his street sports and comrades, for since he had shocked his parents by dumping down a new pair of boots on the table, he could not be trusted without supervision.

Not that he had stolen the boots—far worse! Beguiled by a card cunningly printed in Hebrew, he had attended the evening classes of the *Meshumodim*, those converted Jews who try to bribe their brethren from the faith, and who are the bugbear and execration of the Ghetto.

Daniel was thereafter looked upon at home as a lamb who had escaped from the lions' den, and must be the object of their vengeful pursuit, while on Bloomah devolved the duties of shepherd and sheep-dog.

It was in the midst of all these diverse duties that Bloomah tried to go to school by day, and do her home-lessons by night. She did not murmur against her mother, though she often pleaded. She recognised that the poor woman was similarly distracted between domestic duties and turns at the machines upstairs.

Only it was hard for the child to dovetail the two halves of her life. At night she must sit up as late as her elders, poring over her school-books, and in the morning it was a fierce rush to get through her share of the housework in time for the red mark. In Mrs. Beckenstein's language: "Don't eat, don't sleep, boil nor bake, stew nor roast, nor fry, nor nothing."

Her case was even worse than her mother imagined, for sometimes it was ten minutes to nine before Bloomah could sit down to her own breakfast, and then the steaming cup of tea served by her mother was a terrible hindrance; and if that good woman's head were turned, Bloomah would sneak towards the improvised sink—which consisted of two dirty buckets, the one holding the clean water being recognisable by the tin pot standing on its covering-board—where she would pour half her tea into the one bucket and fill up from the other.

When this stratagem was impossible, she almost scalded herself in her gulpy haste. Then how she snatched up her satchel and ran through rain, or snow, or fog, or scorching sunshine! Yet often she lost her breath without gaining her mark, and as she cowered tearfully under the angry eyes of the class-room, a stab at her heart was added to the stitch in her side.

It made her class-mates only the angrier that, despite all her unpunctuality, she kept a high position in the class, even if she could never quite attain prize-rank.

But there came a week when Bloomah's family remained astonishingly quiet and self-sufficient, and it looked as if the Banner might once again adorn the dry, scholastic room and throw a halo of romance round the blackboard.

Then a curious calamity befell. A girl who had left the school for another at the end of the previous week, returned on the Thursday, explaining that her parents had decided to keep her in the old school. An indignant heart-cry broke through all the discipline—

"Teacher, don't have her!"

From Bloomah burst the peremptory command: "Go back, Sarah!"

For the unlucky children felt that her interval would now be reckoned one of absence. And they were right. Sarah reduced the gross attendance by six, and the Banner was lost.

Yet to have been so near incited them to a fresh spurt. Again the tantalising Thursday was reached before their hopes were dashed. This time the breakdown was even crueller, for every pinafored pupil, not excluding Bloomah, was in her place, red-marked.

Upon this saintly company burst suddenly Bloomah's mother, who, ignoring the teacher and pointing her finger dramatically at her daughter, cried—

"Bloomah Beckenstein, go home!"

Bloomah's face became one large red mark, at which all the other girls' eyes were directed. Tears of humiliation and distress dripped down her cheeks, over the dark rings. If she were thus haled off ere she had received two hours of secular instruction, her attendance would be cancelled.

The class was all in confusion. "Fold arms!" cried the teacher sharply, and the girls sat up rigidly. Bloomah obeyed instinctively with the rest.

"Bloomah Beckenstein, do you want me to pull you out by your plait?"

"Mrs. Beckenstein, really you mustn't come here like that!" said the teacher in her most ladylike accents.

"Tell Bloomah that," answered Mrs. Beckenstein, unimpressed. "She's come here by runnin' away from home. There's nobody but her to see to things, for we are all broken in our bones from dancin' at a weddin' last night, and comin' home at four in the mornin' and pourin' cats and dogs. If you go to our house, please, teacher, you'll see my Benjy in bed; he's given up his day's work; he must have his sleep; he earns three pounds a week—he can afford to be in bed, thank God. So now, then, Bloomah Beckenstein! Don't they teach you here: 'Honour thy father and thy mother'?"

Poor Bloomah rose, feeling vaguely that fathers and mothers should not dishonour their children. With hanging head she moved to the door—and burst into a passion of tears as soon as she got outside.

After, if not in consequence of, this behaviour, Mrs. Beckenstein broke her leg, and lay for weeks with the limb cased in plaster-of-Paris. That finished the chances of the Banner for a long time. Between nursing and house-management, Bloomah could scarcely ever put in an attendance.

So heavily did her twin troubles weigh upon the sensitive child, day and night, that she walked almost with a limp and dreamed of her name in the Register

"With hanging head she moved to the door."

with ominous rows of black ciphers; they stretched on and on to infinity—in vain did she turn page after page in the hope of a red mark; the little black eggs became larger and larger, till at last horrid horned insects began to creep from them and scramble all over her, and she woke with creeping flesh. Sometimes she lay swathed and choking in the coils of a Black Banner.

And to add to these worries, the School Board officer hovered and buzzed around, threatening summonses.

But at last she was able to escape to her beloved school. The expected scowl of the room was changed to a sigh of relief: extremes meet, and her absence had been so prolonged that reproach was turned to welcome.

Bloomah remorsefully redoubled her exertions. The hope of the Banner flamed anew in every breast. But the other classes were no less keen: a fifth standard, in particular, kept the Banner for a full month, grimly holding it against all comers, came they ever so regularly and punctually.

Suddenly a new and melancholy factor entered into the competition. An epidemic of small-pox broke out in the East End, with its haphazard effects upon the varying classes. Red marks, and black marks, medals and prizes, all was luck and lottery. The pride of the fifth standard was laid low; one of its

girls was attacked, two others were kept at home through parental panic. A disturbing insecurity as of an earthquake vibrated through the school. In Bloomah's class alone—as if inspired by her martial determination—the ranks stood firm, unwavering.

The epidemic spread. The Ghetto began to talk of special psalms in the little synagogues.

II.

In this crisis which the epidemic produced, the Banner seemed drifting steadily towards Bloomah and her mates. They started Monday morning with all hands on deck, so to speak; they sailed round Tuesday and Wednesday without a black mark in the school-log; the Thursday on which they had so often split was passed under full canvas; and if they could only get through Friday, the trophy was theirs.

And Friday was the easiest day of all, inasmuch as, in view of the incoming Sabbath, it finished earlier; school did not break up between the two attendances, there was a mere dinner-interval in the playground at midday. Nobody could get away, and whoever scored the first mark was sure of the second.

Bloomah was up before dawn on the fateful winter morning: she could run no risks of being late. She polished off all her housework, wondering anxiously if any of her class-mates would oversleep herself, yet at heart confident that all were as eager as she. Still, there was always that troublesome small-pox——! She breathed a prayer that God would keep all the little girls and send them the Banner.

As she sat at breakfast the postman brought a post-card for her mother. Bloomah's heart was in her mouth when Mrs. Beckenstein clucked her tongue in reading it. She felt sure that the epidemic had invaded one of those numerous family hearths.

"Her mother handed her the card silently."

Her mother handed her the card silently.

"Dear Mother,—I am rakked with neuraljia. Send Bloomah to fry the fish.

"Becky."

Bloomah turned white: this was scarcely less tragic.

"Poor Becky!" said her heedless parent.

"There's time after school," she faltered.

"What!" shrieked Mrs. Beckenstein. "And not give the fish time to get cold! It's that red mark again—sooner than lose it you'd see your own sister eat hot fish. Be

off at once to her, you unnatural brat, or I'll bang the frying-pan about your head! That'll give you a red mark—yes, and a black mark, too! My poor Becky never persecuted me with Banners, and she's twice the scholard you are."

"Why, she can't spell 'neuralgia,'" said Bloomah resentfully.

"And who want's to spell a thing like that? It's bad enough to feel it. Wait till you have babies and neuralgy of your own, and you'll see how you'll spell."

"She can't spell 'racked' either," put in Daniel.

His mother turned on him witheringly. "She didn't go to school with the *Meshumodim*."

Bloomah sullenly picked up her satchel.

"What's your books for? You don't fry fish with books." Mrs. Beckenstein wrested it away from her and dashed it on the floor. The pencil-case rolled one way, the thimble another.

"But I can get to school for the afternoon attendance."

"Madness! With your sister in agony? Have you no feelings? Don't let me see your brazen face before the Sabbath!"

Bloomah crept out, broken-hearted. On the way to Becky's her feet turned of themselves by long habit down the miry street in which the red-brick building rose in dreary importance. The sight of the great iron gate and the hurrying children caused her a throb of guilt. For a moment she stood wrestling with the temptation to enter.

It was but for the moment. She might rise to the heresy of *hot* fried fish in lieu of cold, but Becky's Sabbath altogether devoid of fried fish was a thought too sacrilegious for her childish brain.

From her earliest babyhood chunks of cold fried fish had been part of her conception of the Day of Rest. Visions and odours of her mother frying plaice and soles—at worst, cod or mackerel—were inwoven with her most sacred memories of the coming Sabbath: it is probable she thought Friday was short for Frying-day.

With a sob she turned back, hurrying as if to escape the tug of temptation.

"Bloomah! Where are you off to?"

It was the alarmed cry of a class-mate. Bloomah took to her heels, her face a fiery mass of shame and grief.

Towards midday Becky's fish, nicely browned and sprigged with parsley, stood cooling on the great, blue, willow-pattern dish, and Becky's neuralgia abated, perhaps from the mental relief of the spectacle.

When the clock struck twelve, Bloomah was allowed to scamper off to school, in the desperate hope of saving the afternoon attendance.

The London sky was of lead, and the London pavement of mud, but her heart was aglow with hope. As she reached the familiar street, a certain strangeness in its aspect struck her. People stood at the doors gossiping and excited, as though no Sabbath pots were a-cooking; straggling groups possessed the roadway, impeding her advance; and as she got nearer to the school, the crowd thickened, the roadway became impassable, a gesticulating mob blocked the iron gate.

Poor Bloomah paused in her breathless career, ready to cry at this malicious Fate fighting against her, and for the first time allowing herself time to speculate on what was up. All around her she became aware of weeping and wailing and shrieking and wringing of hands.

The throng was chiefly composed of Russian and Roumanian women of the latest immigration, as she could tell by the pious wigs hiding their tresses. Those in the front were pressed against the bars of the gate, shrieking through them, shaking them with passion.

Although Bloomah's knowledge of Yiddish was slight—as became a scion of an old English family—she could make out their elemental ejaculations.

"You murderers!"

"Give me my Rachel!"

"They are destroying our daughters as Pharaoh destroyed our sons!"

"Give me back my children, and I'll go back to Russia!"

"They are worse than the Russians, the poisoners!"

"O God of Abraham! how shall I live without my Leah?"

On the other side of the bars, the children—released for the dinner-interval—were clamouring equally, shouting, weeping, trying to get to their mothers. Some howled, with their sleeves rolled up, to exhibit the upper arm.

"See!" the women cried. "The red marks! Oh, the poisoners!"

A light began to break upon Bloomah's brain. Evidently the School Board had suddenly sent down compulsory vaccinators.

"I won't die!" moaned a plump, golden-haired girl. "I'm too young to die yet."

"My little lamb is dying!" A woman near Bloomah, with auburn wisps showing under her black wig, wrung her hands. "I hear her talk—always, always about the red mark. Now they have given it her. She is poisoned—my little apple!"

"Your little carrot is all right," said Bloomah testily. "They've only vaccinated her."

The woman caught at the only word she understood. "Vaccinate, vaccinate!" she repeated. Then relapsing into jargon and raising her hands heavenward: "A sudden death upon them all!"

Bloomah turned despairingly in search of a wigless woman. One stood at her elbow.

"Can't you explain to her that the doctors mean no harm?" Bloomah asked.

"Oh, don't they, indeed? Just you read this!" She flourished a handbill, English on one side, Yiddish on the other.

Bloomah read the English version, not without agitation—

Mothers, look after your little ones! The School Tyrants are plotting to inject filthy vaccine into their innocent veins. Keep them away rather than let them be poisoned to enrich the doctors.

There followed statistics to appal even Bloomah. What wonder if the refugees from lands of persecution—lands in which anything might happen—believed they had fallen from the frying-pan into the fire; if the rumour that executioners with instruments had entered the school-buildings had run like wildfire through the quarter, enflaming Oriental imagination to semi-madness!

While Bloomah was reading, a head-shawled woman fainted, and the din and frenzy grew.

"But I was vaccinated when a baby, and I'm all right," murmured Bloomah, half to reassure herself.

"My arm! I'm poisoned!" And another pupil flew frantically towards the gate.

The women outside replied with a dull roar of rage and hurled themselves furiously against the lock.

A window on the playground was raised with a sharp snap, and the head-mistress appeared, shouting alternately at the children and the parents; but she was neither heard nor understood, and a Polish crone shook an answering fist.

"You old maid—childless, pitiless!"

Shrill whistles sounded and resounded from every side, and soon a *posse* of eight policemen were battling with the besiegers, trying to push themselves between them and the gate. A fat and genial officer worked his way past Bloomah, his truncheon ready for action.

"Don't hurt the poor women," Bloomah pleaded. "They think their children are being poisoned."

"I know, missie. What can you do with such greenhorns? Why don't they stop in their own country? I've just been vaccinated myself, and it's no joke to get my arm knocked about like this!"

"Then show them the red marks, and that will quiet them."

The policeman laughed. A sleeveless policeman! It would destroy all the dignity and prestige of the force.

"Then I'll show them mine," said Bloomah resolutely. "Mine are old and not very showy, but perhaps they'll do. Lift me up, please—I mean on your unvaccinated arm."

Overcome by her earnestness, the policeman hoisted her on his burly shoulder. The apparent arrest made a diversion; all eyes turned towards her.

"You *narronim* (fools)!" she shrieked, desperately mustering her scraps of Yiddish. "Your children are safe! *Ich bin* vaccinated. Look!" She rolled up her sleeve. "*Der* policeman *ist* vaccinated. Look—if I tap him, he winces. See!"

"Hold on, missie!" The policeman grimaced.

"The King *ist* vaccinated," went on Bloomah, "and the Queen, and the Prince of Wales, and the teachers themselves. There are no devils inside there. This paper"—she held up the bill—"is lies and falsehood!" She tore it into fragments.

"No; it is true as the Law of Moses," retorted a man in the mob.

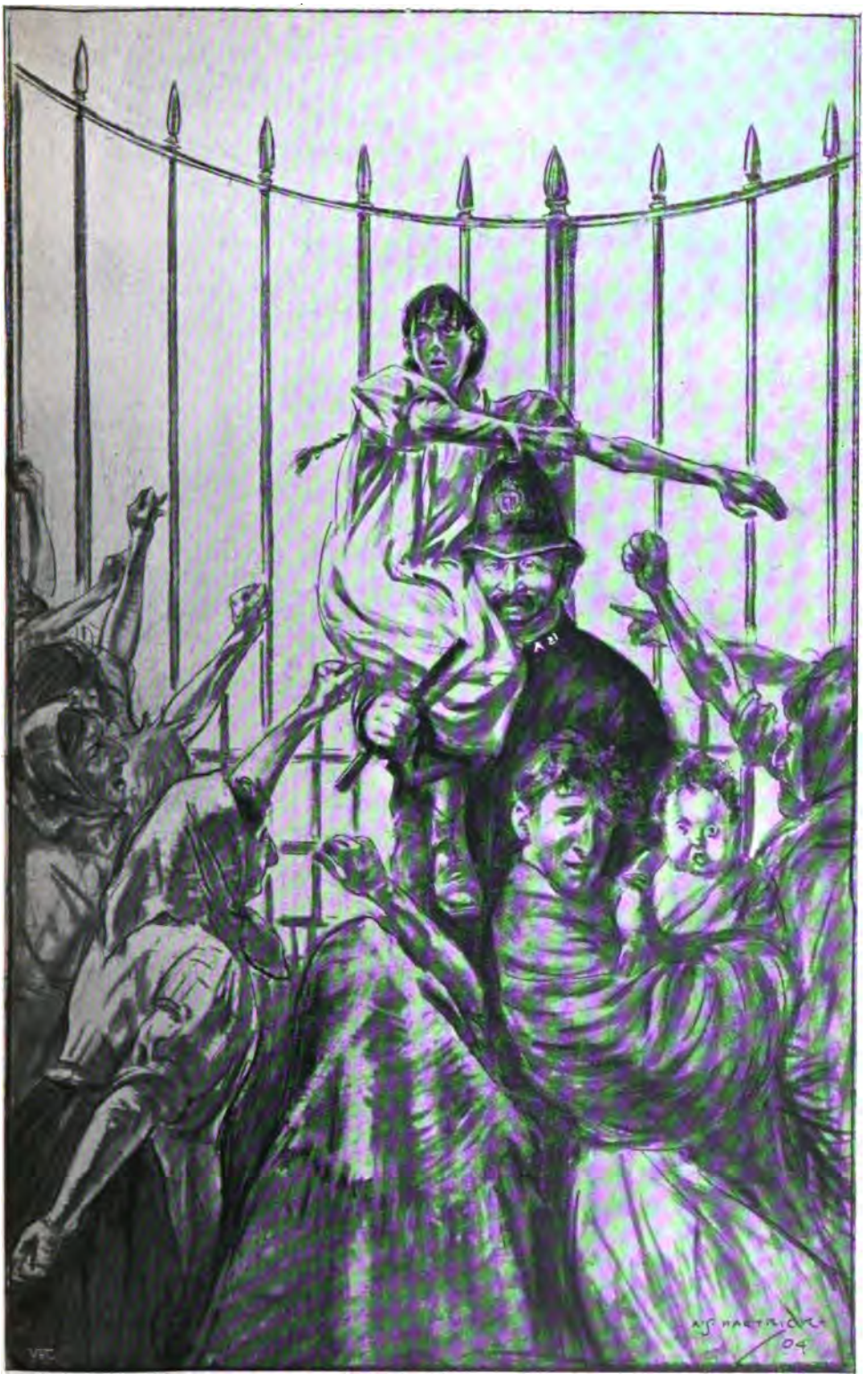
"As the Law of Moses!" echoed the women hoarsely.

Bloomah had an inspiration. "The Law of Moses! Pooh! Don't you know this is written by the *Meshumodim?*"

The crowd looked blank, fell silent. If, indeed, the handbill was written by apostates, what could it hold but Satan's lies?

Bloomah profited by her moment of triumph. "Go home, you *narronim!*" she cried pityingly from her perch. And then, veering round towards the children behind the bars: "Shut up, you squalling sillies!" she cried. "As for you, Golda Benjamin, I'm ashamed of you—a girl of your age! Put your sleeve down, cry-baby!"

Bloomah would have carried the day, had not her harangue distracted the police from observing another party of rioters—women, assisted by husbands hastily summoned from



"'Your children are safe! Look!' She rolled up her sleeve."

stall and barrow, who were battering at a side gate. And at this very instant they burst it open, and with a great cry poured into the playground, screaming and searching for their progeny.

The police darted round to the new battlefield, expecting an attack upon doors and windows, and Bloomah was hastily set down in the seething throng and carried with it in the wake of the police, who could not prevent it flooding through the broken side gate.

The large playground became a pandemonium of parents, children, police, and teachers, all shouting and gesticulating. But there was no riot. The Law could not prevent mothers and fathers from snatching their offspring to their bosoms and making off overjoyed. The children who had not the luck to be kidnapped escaped of themselves, some panic-stricken, some merely mischievous, and in a few minutes the school was empty.

* * * * *

The School Management Committee sat formally to consider this unprecedented episode. It was decided to cancel the attendance for the day. Red marks, black marks—all fell into equality; the very ciphers were reduced to their native nothingness. The school-week was made to end on the Thursday.

Next Monday morning saw Bloomah at her desk, happiest of a radiant sisterhood. On the wall shone the Banner.

THE LESSON.

LOVE came, like some gold-shadowed hint of spring,
And straight the grey streets woke to pearly bloom,
And all the hills to purple trembling.
Love came—and lo, a rainbow spanned his room.

He dreamed he saw the world as it should be.
He saw it as no other eyes might see.

Love grew, red-mantled like an eager flame,
And all the cities of the world swam dim.
Alone he saw Her eyes and heard Her name.
The hills and streets had no new line for him.

"Here lies the world," he cried, and kissed Her hands,
And turned from life as one who understands.

Love stayed, trust-girdled, kind, and bright, and clear;
He saw that hearts were red and skies were blue;
The far stars' thinnest whispers reached his ear;
He saw men's faces and he read them true.

"Look now!" said Love; and with his lighted eyes
He saw that life was sane, and glad, and wise.

THEODORE ROBERTS.

THE NEW LAKE MŒRIS.

MORE WATER FOR EGYPT:

A NEW LAKE MŒRIS.

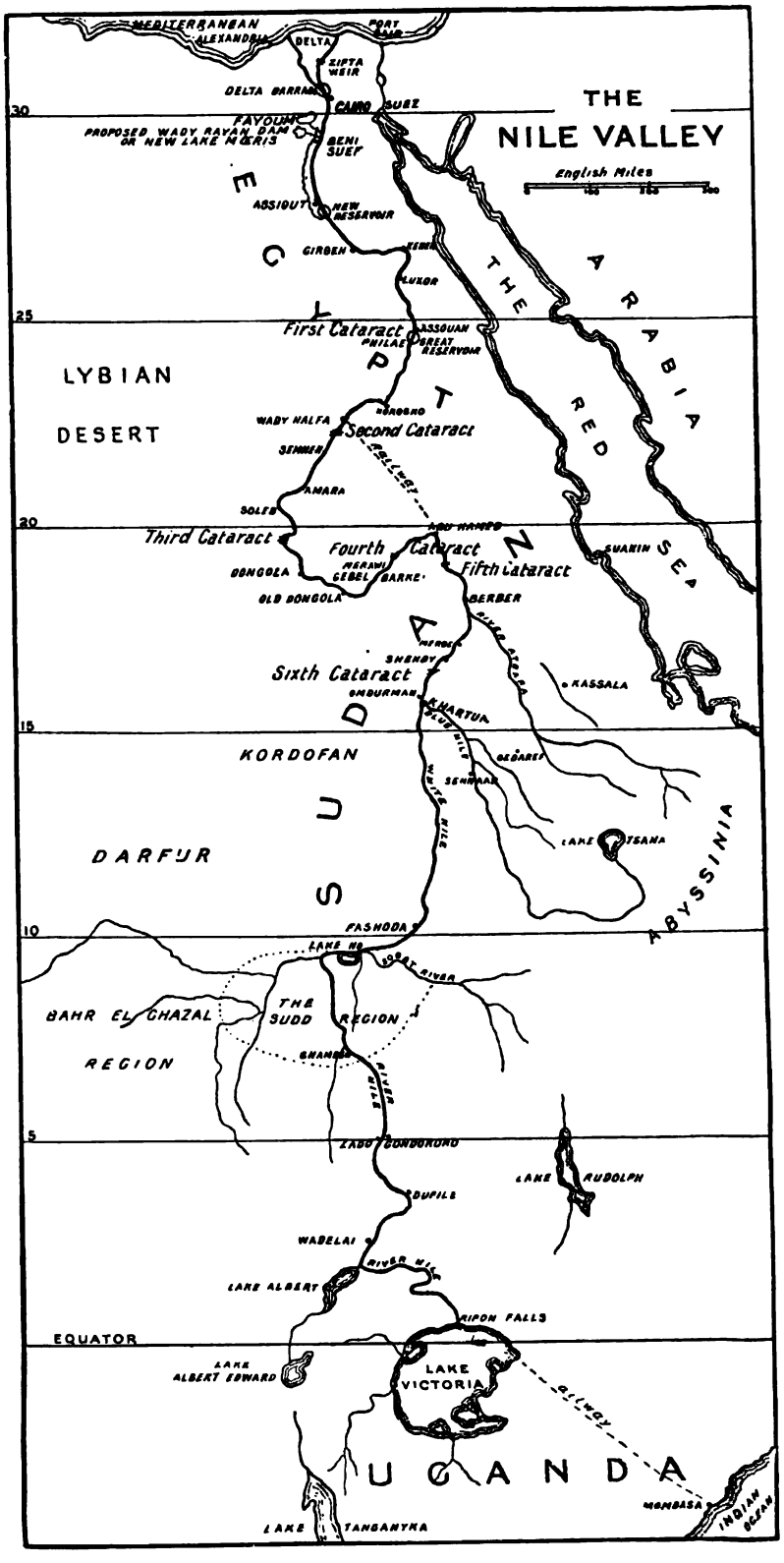
By JOHN WARD,

Author of "Pyramids and Progress."

THE principles of Christianity, as tersely told by the Apostle, are Faith, Hope, and Charity, but the greatest of these is Charity. The salvation of Egypt, as carried out by Lord Cromer on similar principles, has been effected by honest government, the teaching of self-reliance, and irrigation, but we may certainly say that the greatest of these is irrigation. It is the very life of Egypt, and the irrigation engineer has restored that life to the old land. It is this that has paid its debts, provided the funds for its army of self-defence, and, taking away its reproach of being the worst government, made it an example of the best. This much has irrigation done for the country, under English engineers trained in our Indian Empire.

The culminating point of its irrigation was supposed to have been reached in the great Reservoirs recently completed. But the inventor of the Reservoirs, Sir William Willcocks, is not satisfied, and would store up yet more of the precious Nile flood which is lost in the Mediterranean every year. Success has made him bold. It is not given to many to see their great inventions realised beyond their dreams in their lifetime. Ten years ago, no one thought that his Reservoirs would ever be made. They are completed and at work. Their cost was five millions sterling, but they are all settled for, without costing the country anything—in fact, they have already enormously increased the revenue. So now Sir William Willcocks comes into the field again, with a new Dam which only will cost half of those completed, and will add some £45,000,000 to the capital of Egypt! And this is to be done merely by a further bottling up of milliards of gallons of Nile flood which is annually lost in the Mediterranean. In fact, to use the words of Shakespeare, the Nile, when "taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

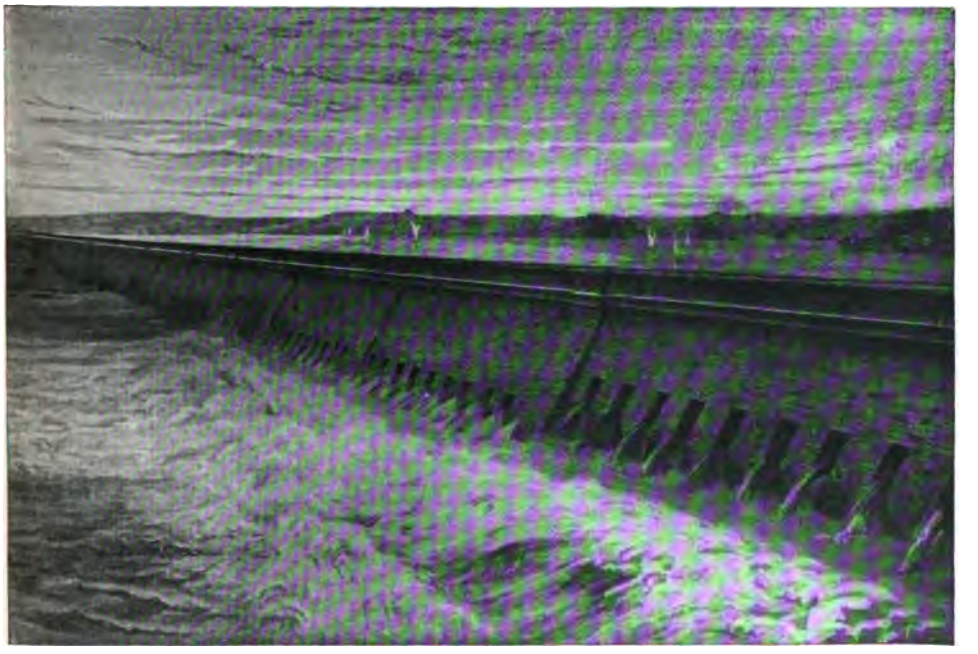
Sir W. Willcocks has hitherto carried out what he has promised, which proves him to be no visionary, therefore his new scheme deserves a patient hearing. Having succeeded in his first great project, he is not afraid to undertake a second not nearly so great. Were he allowed, he would do it now, and have it all at work in five years' time! He may not be permitted to see his plans realised just right off. But his project has got the approval of several of the highest irrigation authorities in India and Egypt, and it undoubtedly will be done some day, and very probably in our own time. We, however, for the present, have to leave the astute Lord Cromer to decide if it be a wise project, or when the country will be fit for the realisation of the whole or only part of this new design of a great engineer. Part of it, the raising of the wall of the great Reservoir, has been recommended by Lord Cromer in his last Egyptian Report, August, 1904. Meanwhile it may interest the public to know something of the



details of the boldest and latest project of its kind.

The Teaching of Ancient Irrigation Works.

Mena, the first king of all Egypt, who lived somewhere about 4,750 years before our era, seems to have been a great apostle of irrigation. In his day, the science of levels and what we know as civil engineering must have been far advanced, for the engineers of his time had ascertained that there were depressions on the margin of the Lybian Desert with levels some 150 feet below the mud in the Fayoum, in many places forty feet thick. Either in the time of the First Empire kings, or subsequently, this lake was undoubtedly employed as a reservoir, filled to high level at the time of the annual Nile flood, and stored up then, so as to give back supplies of water when the river had fallen too low for irrigation purposes. We certainly know that this was done in the XII. Dynasty period, about 2700 B.C. * At this time the population of Egypt was very great, and Amenemhat III. carved a new province out of the great artificial sheet of water, afterwards known as



THE ASSOUAN DAM AT ITS FINAL HEIGHT.
The white line shows the portion added.

Mediterranean. So Mena made canals from the river Nile leading to the district now known as the Fayoum, and the Nile flood was turned into the depression when great engineering works were in progress in or near the Delta. Mena built the city of Memphis, and we are told that he diverted the Nile and carried it round his new city. He then used the Lybian depression as a vast "escape," and this means of running the Nile low no doubt gave him the power of building the "white wall" round his city "in the dry." The whole province of the Fayoum thus became a great lake, and remained so for thousands of years, as is proved by deposits of stratified Nile Lake Mœris. He thus created millions of acres of fertile land by bold reclamation works, the limits of which can still be traced.

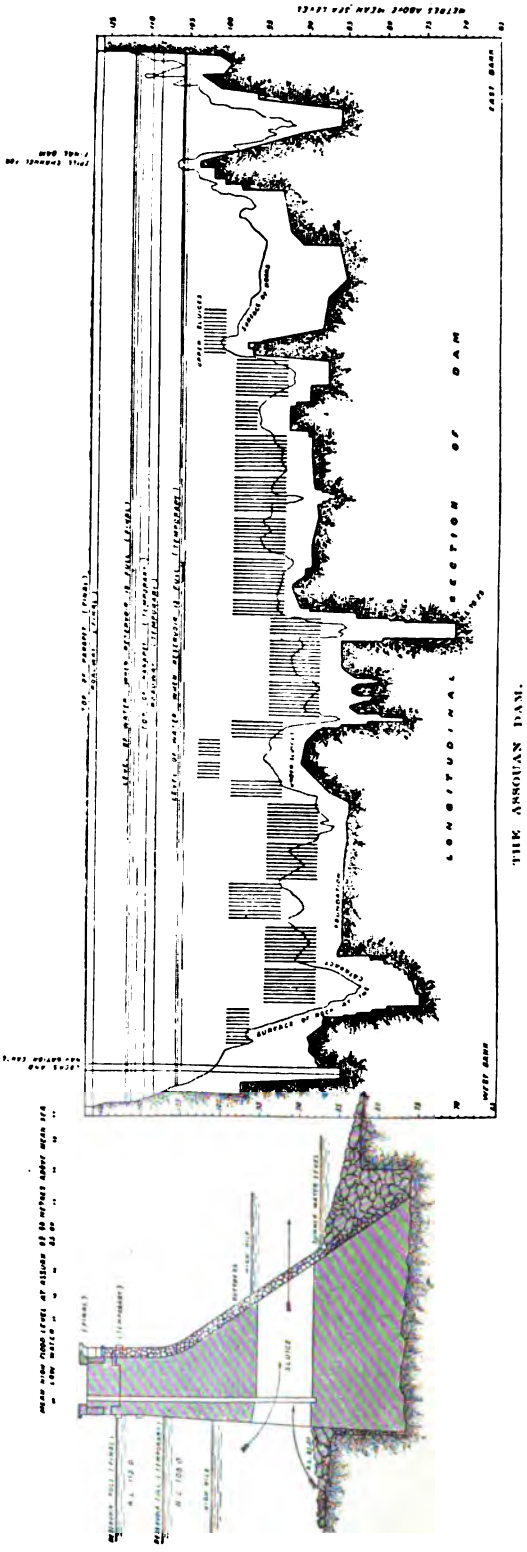
A New Lake Mœris.

Herodotus tells us the irrigation works of Lake Mœris were perfect in his day, 350 B.C. He tells us that the Lake took six months to fill, and six months to give back its waters. Now, Sir W. Willcocks, having got his Assouan Dam at full work, wants to restore the ancient system by making a new Lake Mœris.

* The most interesting work available on the "Fayoum and Lake Mœris" is that by Sir Hanbury Brown. (Stanford, London.)

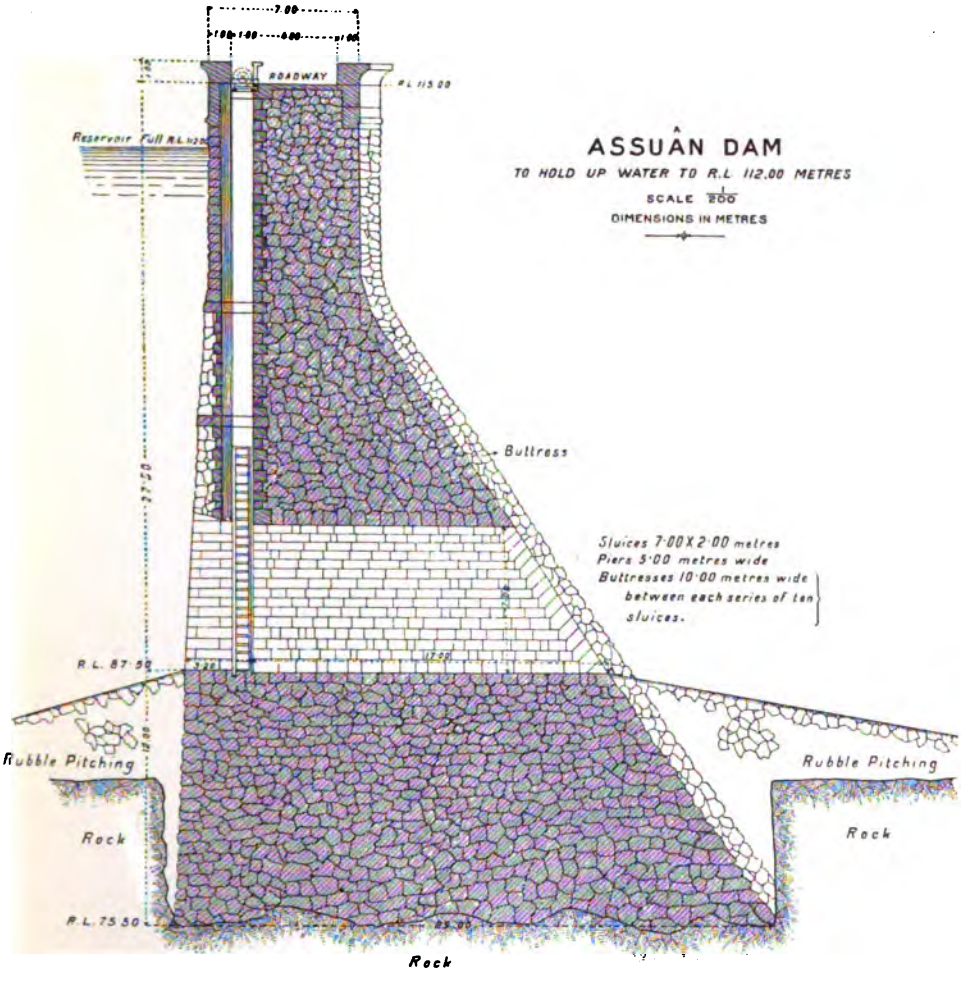
The bed of the old lake being now reclaimed and dried up (converted into the fertile province of Fayoum), Willcocks proposes to utilise a similar depression, south of the former one, into which the Nile water never flowed before. This depression is known as the Wady Rayan, which is much below the Mediterranean, and water from the Nile will flow into it by gravitation when conducted to it by a canal. At high Nile he will conduct the flood into it; and when the river begins to fall, he will close the gates and dam the stored water up for use. The new supply will thus be available at the time when the supplies from the Assouan Reservoir are exhausted or there is no more water to spare. Thus the Wady Rayan Reservoir will work in connection with the great one at Assouan, and so perennial supplies will be assured to the whole country. Having given a general notion of the new scheme, we will proceed to give a description of its details, as supplied by Sir W. Willcocks himself (in a recent lecture in Cairo), but omitting technical matters, as this is intended to be a popular account of a rather intricate subject.

Before entering upon the engineering question involved in the new project of Sir William Willcocks, it may be remarked that in the following particulars, much of his reasoning will be found to depend on money values. He is nothing if not practical; his whole object is to show that his schemes *will pay*. Sir W. Willcocks was employed for several years to value the lands for taxation purposes all over Egypt; this *he did to the entire satisfaction of both the fellahin and the Government.** So his knowledge



THE ASSOUAN DAM.

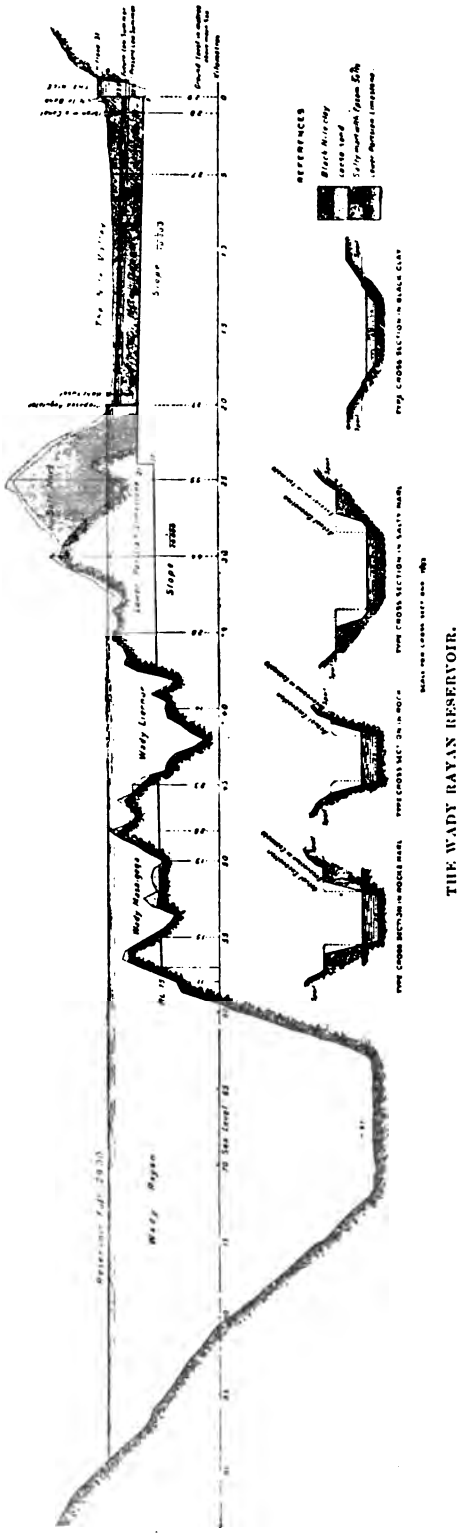
* To illustrate this, I will relate an anecdote. Some years ago, I was travelling in a remote part of Egypt, never visited by tourists. I was alone, save for a trusty native guide, one Achmet, who, before he entered my service, had been in the employment of Willcocks. We landed at a village near which was an ancient Pyramid, of which I was desirous of making a drawing. My guide went on before, to prepare for my visit. I was surprised to find the Sheikh and head-men in their best robes and turbans come to meet me. They welcomed me, gave me a most kind reception, produced coffee, and pressed me to stay. This I could not do, as my boat was waiting, the sun was getting low, and I was anxious to reach the next town before dark. When we left, I said to Achmet: "Why was I received so kindly?" "Oh!" he said, "you were a friend of Cocks' (his name among the natives), and the Sheikh very fond of Cocks—ever since he came here to value his land; he doubled his valuation; he so fair, he like him."



of the value of land all over Egypt is practical, and his experience, which was unique in this respect, has been heightened by his management of the sale of the property under the Daira Sanieh. Therefore absolute reliance can be placed on his figures.

Egypt has a total irrigable area of six and a quarter million acres. Of this area a quarter of a million of acres which lie along the edge of the desert can only be inundated in time of flood, for all time, to prevent the sands of the desert from spreading over the Nile valley. Their value is £5,000,000. Four million acres are perennially irrigated. They have a mean value of £55 per acre, and have a total value of £220,000,000. Of the remaining two million acres, two-thirds are irrigated only in flood, and one-third is not irrigated at all. These two million acres have a mean value of £25 per acre, and are worth £50,000,000. The land of Egypt may be considered as worth £275,000,000 to-day. If it were possible to perennially irrigate the two million acres which are without irrigation, their value would be increased by £30 per acre, or by £60,000,000 in all.

The problem, therefore, before us is how to provide perennial irrigation to these two million acres, and so add £60,000,000 to the wealth of the country. It is known that each milliard of cubic metres of water stored in reservoirs situated in Egypt is sufficient to insure the conversion of half a million acres from flood to perennial irrigation. Egypt, therefore, requires reservoirs capable of storing four milliards of cubic metres of water. The Assouan Dam was intended to be six metres higher than it has been built. The opposition raised by certain societies (most of whose members had never seen the



THE WADY RAYAN RESERVOIR.
Longitudinal section of proposed canal.

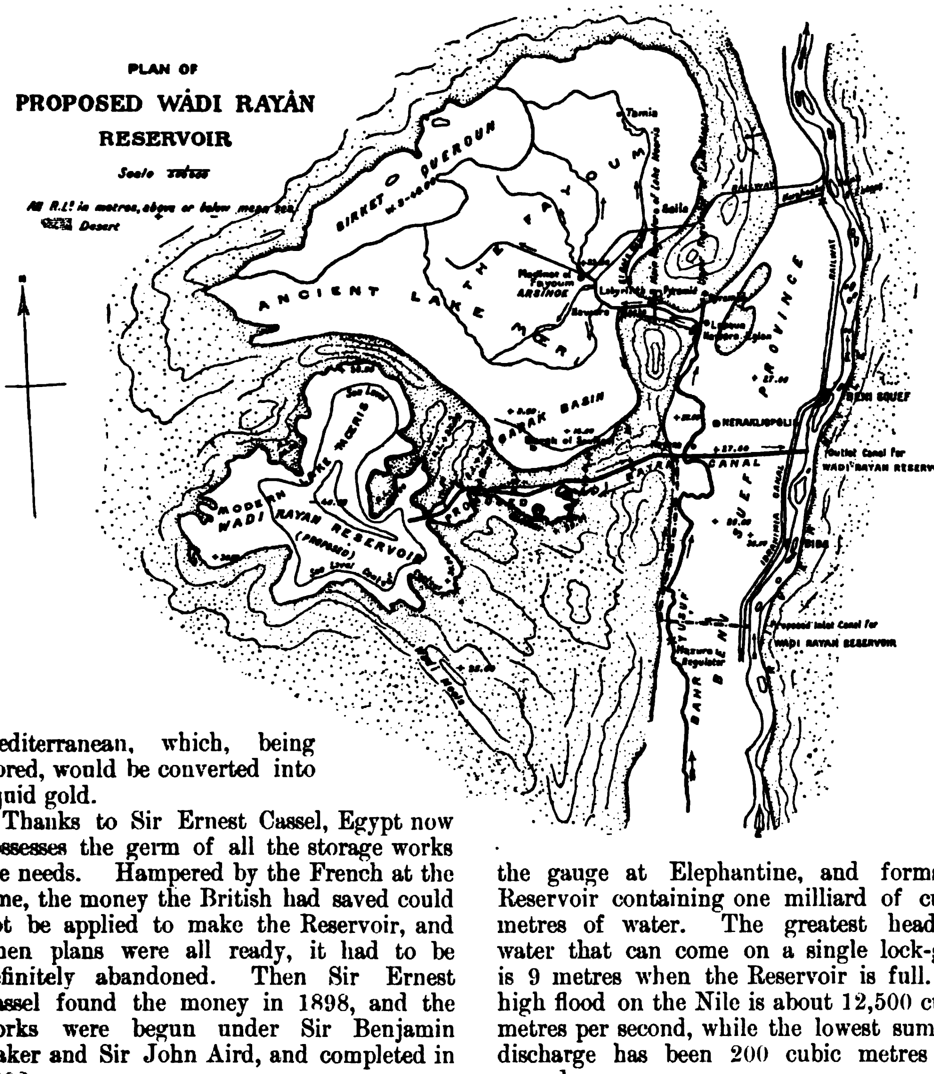
site) regarding the ruins on the little island of Philæ was the cause of the wall being made so much lower than Sir W. Willcocks had planned it. The wall of the Dam has been made sufficiently strong to bear the extra six metres which its designer would now add to it.*

Sir W. Willcocks gives some facts not generally known regarding the working of the new Reservoir. At its present level it contains, when full, one milliard cubic metres of water, which will suffice for the conversion of half a million acres to perennial irrigation, adding £15,000,000 to the wealth of Egypt. But though the Dam was only completed at the end of 1902, already the whole of the water has been devoted to special tracts, and the Government is reluctantly compelled to refuse applications for water. This has been an unexpected blow to the country, which had been waiting patiently for six years for the long-promised Reservoir. While the whole world is crying for that long-stapled cotton which in its highest grades is the speciality of Egypt, the Egyptian landowners of one and a half millions of acres are compelled to wait perhaps for years to come. And yet the provision of the remaining three milliards of water is quite within the competence of the country.

Sir. W. Willcocks, quoting from the Official Reports on the financial condition of Egypt, states: The value of the Accumulated Economies is £4,991,000. The Commissioners of the Public Debt hold £8,774,000.† Sir W. Willcocks proceeds—we give his own words: This brings in to the country some 3½ per cent. per annum. If half of it were spent on water storage and flood protection, it would add £45,000,000 to the wealth of the country, which would bring in, not 3½ per cent. on £8,774,000, but 7 per cent. on £45,000,000. The strong men who undertook the Assouan Reservoir are not likely to be long undecided when all this comes to be understood. While they wait, the Nile is pouring its rich waters unprofitably into the

* Of course, the extra six metres of water would engulf the buildings on Philæ, but Sir W. Willcocks tells us that the Government offered £200,000 to pay for the removal of the ruins and re-erection on the adjacent island of Biggeh, which will always stand boldly above the waters. There can be no objection to this being done now, seeing that the old island has lost all its beauty—its palms, its banks, and foreshore are drowned-out as the Reservoir now exists.

† The new Anglo-French Agreement will facilitate the outlay of public moneys for reproductive works like this. The Government will now be free to spend its savings to the best interests of the country.



Mediterranean, which, being stored, would be converted into liquid gold.

Thanks to Sir Ernest Cassel, Egypt now possesses the germ of all the storage works she needs. Hampered by the French at the time, the money the British had saved could not be applied to make the Reservoir, and when plans were all ready, it had to be definitely abandoned. Then Sir Ernest Cassel found the money in 1898, and the works were begun under Sir Benjamin Baker and Sir John Aird, and completed in 1902.

The Assouan Reservoir

is a granite structure 2,000 metres long which crosses the cataract of the Nile in one continuous straight line. The top of the Dam is a roadway 4 metres wide. The wall is 37 metres high at its deepest point. The Dam is pierced by 140 under-sluices of 7 metres by 2 metres for passing floods, and by 40 upper sluices of 3½ metres by 2 metres for passing the high-level water of the Reservoir. The sluices have "Stoney" gates worked by winches from the roadway level. At the west end is a navigable channel with four locks of 80 metres by 9 metres. As the Dam exists at present it can hold up water to a height of 22 metres above the zero of the gauge at Elephantine, and forms a Reservoir containing one milliard of cubic metres of water. The greatest head of water that can come on a single lock-gate is 9 metres when the Reservoir is full. A high flood on the Nile is about 12,500 cubic metres per second, while the lowest summer discharge has been 200 cubic metres per second.

The great Dam is a perfect success, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough.

It can never silt-up, for while the Nile is discharging its flood of muddy waters, the whole of the sluices are open, and the river passes through without parting with its silt; this is the great feature of the Dams, for Egypt would be considerably the poorer if deprived of this rich silt. When the turbid flood has passed, and the comparatively clear water supply of the river has begun to arrive, the sluices are gradually closed and the Reservoir filled. Beginning about December 1st, the Dam is filled in one hundred days. It will ordinarily be full on March 1st. No additional water is needed for irrigation between March 1st and May 1st,

as the river naturally has enough for the requirements of the area at present under crop at this season. As the area under perennial irrigation will be gradually increased, the demand for water for the new lands will begin about April 1st. The demand increases through May and June, and the Reservoir will then be aiding the river with its supplement. If the flood is very late, water may be required from the Reservoir till July 10th; if the flood is early, no water will be needed after June 20th, as in 1903, the first year of the Reservoir. The earlier the flood, the more effective the Reservoir. By the time the flood has begun to get turbid, the under and upper sluices will all be open, and the muddy waters of the Nile will sweep through the Dam without impediment.

Sir W. Willcocks states from his own knowledge what this means to Egypt — a plentiful irrigation to a fallow field in flood has a manurial value of sixteen shillings per acre.

If the Dam were raised to the originally intended height —that is, by adding six metres to the present wall — it would hold up another milliard of cubic metres of water. The cost of this alteration would be roughly £500,000. (Sir William Willcocks had all the details laid before his audience in Cairo when he launched the scheme.) Two new locks must be added, and all the one hundred and eighty sluices have their mechanical working lengthened. (This also includes £50,000 compensation for lands drowned out.) When the Assouan Dam has been raised, the two remaining milliards required must be supplied by the new Lake Mœris, *when working in conjunction with the Assouan Reservoir*. This new projected Lake *by itself* can give a plentiful discharge in April and May, less in June, and very little in July. But when the Assouan is capable of supplying two milliards, it will be possible to utilise the Mœris Lake to its utmost capacity. The Assouan Reservoir, being high above the level of the Nile, can give its supply at the beginning or end of the summer; it can give it slowly, or with a rush; while the proposed Lake Mœris being directly in communication with the Nile, and only slightly above low Nile level, its discharge would depend entirely on the difference of level between it and the Nile, and consequently, as the summer advanced, it would gradually fall, and would not be able to give at the end of the summer a quarter of the discharge it could give at the beginning. Now let us imagine that the Reservoir and the Lake are both completed and full of water, and that it is April 1st. Lake Mœris will be opened out to the Nile, and give all the water needed in that month, while the Assouan Reservoir will be maintained at its full level. In May, Lake Mœris will give nearly the whole supply, and the Reservoir will give a little. In June, the Lake will give little, and the Reservoir much; while in July the Lake will give practically nothing, and the Reservoir the whole supply. Working together in this harmonious manner, the Reservoir and the Lake, which are true complements of each other, will easily provide the whole of the water needed for Egypt.

SIR WILLIAM WILLCOCKS, K.C.M.G.; M.I.C.E.

THE WADY RAYAN

is a depression to the south of the Fayoum, from which it is separated by a ridge of limestone. Its bottom is forty-one metres below sea-level. It has been frequently proposed for the site of a reservoir, but before the existence of the great Reservoir at Assouan was quite unsuitable for the purpose. It now can be made the complement of the Assouan Reservoir, and the two, acting together, can be made to give Egypt all the water it will ever need. This depression Sir W. Willcocks proposes to convert into a "New Lake Mœris," and to convey the flood water to it by a canal from the Nile near Beni-Suef, of sixteen kilometres, and another outlet canal of twenty kilometres—both canals being forty metres wide, and will have regulators on the Nile and on the outlet canal from the Lake. When filled with water, the greatest depth will be seventy metres, and the surface of the Lake will be seven hundred square kilometres. The uppermost four or five metres only will be utilised, annually some three milliards of water. By using pumps, of course, more of the water of the Lake might

be used when the three milliards are drawn off. It will take three or four years to fill the Lake with water from the canal. The entire cost of the Lake and canals will be £2,500,000, which has been all carefully worked out by Sir W. Willcocks. He shows that the Assouan Reservoir alteration will cost £500,000, and, with the outlay of £2,500,000 at Wady Rayan, will add £45,000,000 to the value of Egypt. He also points out that the sides of the Lake, now a howling, barren wilderness, will have Nile mud deposited round them, and will extend cultivable land into the Wady Rayan, as the ancient works fertilised the Fayoum. This will add 20,000 acres at first, and more each year, and every acre will be worth £50 an acre, and he capitalises each 20,000 as worth £1,000,000. The Assiout Barrage will make the filling of the Lake from the Nile a simple affair.

In mentioning the Assiout Barrage, an instance of what Nile Reservoirs can do is worth recording. The Assiout Regulator happened to be completed a year before the contract time, and all the sluices were in place and ready for work. News came to Assiout from Khartoum that the Nile had not risen at the usual time, and that there might be no water for the summer demands for the cotton crop of Lower Egypt. Mr. A. S. Webb (the Government officer at Assiout) thereupon turned the new Regulator to account, and took on himself the bold step of closing down all the sluices. In this way the Nile was kept up, and the cotton crop of Egypt of 1902 was saved. It was a splendid crop. Had it been lost, its value was over two millions sterling, more than the cost of the Assiout portion of the Dam!

* * * * *

When a great engineer, whose designs have already enriched and benefited Egypt in no small degree, offers yet another scheme, the advantages of which are evident from his very lucid explanation, we are bound to pay his views every attention and receive his advice with all respect. This, the culmination of his wonderful experience, he offers freely to the consideration of the British nation, in whose hands the regeneration of Egypt has become a really brilliant achievement. Sir William Willcocks has earned his laurels by his services in Egypt. May he live to see his labours for the further benefit of the land he loves reach their full realisation!

A short biographical notice of this great engineer may be found interesting in the present connection.

Sir William Willcocks, K.C.M.G., M.I.C.E., was born in India in 1852. He grew up and was educated among the great Indian irrigation engineers whose works and whose energy have done so much for the development of our Indian Empire. His whole early life was spent at irrigation developments connected with the Public Works Department. He was one of the experts of irrigation brought from India, by Lord Dufferin's advice, to regenerate Egypt by managing it on Indian lines. He was employed under Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff (along with Colonel Western and others) to make the old French Barrage hold water. This proved such a success that Willcocks was employed by the Government to visit the whole Nile Valley, to design and to recommend new Reservoirs for the Nile. He surveyed, mapped, and planned seven Reservoirs, of which two were specially recommended by him. This occupied him till 1897, when he left the Government service, as there seemed no chance of the Reservoirs being made. Unexpectedly the funds were provided, and the Dams planned by Willcocks are now made and at work. Sir W. Willcocks is now managing director of the great Daira Sanieh Company formed for disposing of the estates which formerly belonged to Ismail Pasha, to the cultivators, which is being successfully carried out. His great work on "Egyptian Irrigation" is a valuable volume and is recognised as the best book on the subject, as it treats exhaustively of every branch of modern hydraulic engineering in Egypt and India.

A GAMBLE IN WHISKERS.

By FRANK RICHARDSON.*

HIS appearance was naturally so vulgar that he did not, in fact, require to wear whiskers at all. However, in order to be on the safe side, he wore a full set of coarse, black, wiry fittings. They stuck out from his cheeks like the prongs of a pitchfork, aggressive and terrifying to the spectator. To his pupils at Sandringham House School these sinister trappings were not altogether without their use. For the boys, from constant observation, regarded them as indices of the state of his temper.

"If the whiskers drooped at early school, one could crib with comparative safety."

If the whiskers drooped at early school, one could crib with comparative safety. If, on the other hand, they were brushed briskly upwards, one would find oneself in an awkward — and possibly a semi-recumbent and conveniently caneable—position, if one did not know one's rep.

The boys realised that it was improbable that their head-master had cultivated these hair-products simply in order to provide them with a convenient barometer as to his frame of mind, and many rumours were current respecting his real reason for indulging to such an extent in so strange a hobby.

A Biblically minded pupil had, on the analogy of the Samson-Delilah case, come to the conclusion that were he shorn of his face-fittings, he would *ipso facto* lose his wonderful skill with the cane. Another boy —Partridge minor, to be exact (though exactitude in these matters is of slight importance)—maintained that he had, in consequence of a vow in early youth, consecrated the entire crop to Jupiter Capitolanus, a deity whose altar must have looked like a jumble-sale. According to a third theory, he was doing the whole thing for a competition, a sort of scholarship for whisker-wearers organised by an undiscoverable newspaper.

So much for the theories.

Now for facts. Sandringham House School, Doctor Johnstone's Academy for the Sons of Gentlemen, is situated at Hampstead, near the "Bull and Bush," a hostelry frequented by Addison in the past, and visited occasionally by Dr. Johnstone in the present.

"If, on the other hand, they were brushed briskly upwards, one would find oneself in an awkward position."

Doctor Johnstone having failed as an auctioneer, and having married a wife possessed of some slight means, embarked on a scholastic career. "Doctor" was a courtesy title which he had conferred on himself for general merit, and because it looked well with "Johnstone."

For the sum of eighty pounds a year, with extras *ad lib.*, the limit of which he was himself the sole judge and arbiter, the Doctor boarded, instructed, and generally "prepared for the Universities, the Army and the Church, and the Diplomatic Service," fifty pupils who would ultimately become bank-clerks or small tradesmen.

The board, he boasted, was precisely similar to that provided at "our great public schools." And herein he spoke true words. For the dietary arrangements at these institutions are designed not to nourish, but to

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eliminate. A boy who can live on such a diet will grow up into a citizen fitted to endure with ease the greatest hardships of life—either as a colonist or a convict. He can exist almost without nutriment. This is the true object of the public school system—the destruction of the weak, the strengthening of the strong. And the Doctor believed in it, and improved on it, and made money by it. These things he did, assisted in his educational mission only by a weekly usher—alleged to be a graduate of St. Bees or St. Davids, Lampeter—and his wife. And it is therefore possible that many of his pupils acquired less erudition than the average boy assimilates at Eton.

Still, for physical training, Sandringham House School is entitled to rank with any of the larger and more costly foundations in the country.

At the beginning of the Easter term, Tom Pegram, the sporting publican, the popular proprietor of the "Chamberlain's Head," Bayswater, handed his son Wilfred over to the care of the Doctor. All the preliminaries had been arranged in the cosy little Early Victorian drawing-room while the master affectionately massaged Wilfred's head, said he was a bright boy, said he would be a father to him and would make him fifty per cent. better than any lad he had ever dealt with. What time Wilfred had behaved with no conspicuous brightness. His huge, dreamy eyes set in a pallid face had wandered from his father's sponge-bag trousers to the Doctor's features, as though mesmerised by the monstrous whiskers.

Then he was sent out of the room whilst the two men conversed in privacy. Of their conversation this is the gist.

"He's a nice boy and a good boy, Doctor, one of the best, though I say it as shouldn't, as the saying goes. But he has his faults."

"Dear, dear!" said the other, wagging his whiskers as who should say: "Who'd have thought it?"

"Or, rather, he has one fault."

"Who is perfect?" asked the Doctor rhetorically, and without hope of obtaining reliable information.

"You may well say that. Who indeed?"

"Not even parents and guardians—in all cases. You'd be surprised at some of the parents and guardians I've had to do with, Mr. Pegram. You would, indeed."

"Dare say I should, Doctor. Dare say I should." The Doctor exhibited a choice collection of assorted sentiments on the care of offspring.

"Well, about Wilfred, it's like this, Doctor. Shall we put it in this way?"

The Doctor signified his approval of putting it (whatever it was) in the suggested manner.

Then the truth came out.

"He bets. Bets on anything—the time of day, or where I get my hat. It's simply

"The sporting publican."

awful in one so young—only eleven, and a perfect genius for laying odds!"

"Shocking, shocking, Mr. Pegram! Gambling is the curse of the British nation."

Uneasily the father answered—

"Well, I don't know about that. I'm a bit of a sportsman myself."

The branch of sport pursued by Mr.

Pegram consisted in affording facilities to other people for losing money on races.

He continued—

"I make a book myself. But betting on races is one thing, and betting on anything that comes into your head is another—especially in the young," he added, not altogether lucidly. "And he's got a genius for being right. Often I've taken him on just to teach him a lesson. But it's no good. I pay up every time. Now, Doctor, I want you to break him of it. Do what you like, but stop his betting. He's too young, far too young."

The Doctor, having expressed proper horror for the vice, and suitable sympathy for the parent, undertook to deal with the matter.

"Not by caning it out of him, Doctor, because he's a good little chap. But—well—it beats me. Better cane him than let it go on."

The interview ended. The admirable publican had a few parting words with his son, patted him on the back with a hearty, hilarious "Well, well, you beat all! You're an all-beater of the first water! Be a good lad and stick to your studies. By-bye, Wilfred," jumped into his trap, and drove off.

* * * * *

The new boy settled down in uncomplaining discomfort at Sandringham House School. He had, as was the custom, deposited his pocket-money with the Doctor. Though nominally repayable on demand, in practice the depositor often found great difficulty in recovering any portion of his cash. For it was the Doctor's pleasing practice to punish all such delinquents as were possessed of funds by fines in lieu of lines. Wilfred had deposited the huge sum of one sovereign, and the Doctor would in due course see to it that he should commit precisely one sovereign's worth of delinquencies. (An angel would have been mulcted by the Doctor for untidiness about the wings.)

Yet for the first three days Wilfred's behaviour was beyond reproach. His propensity for betting could clearly find no outlet, since he and his fellows were entirely devoid of capital.

One thing only perplexed the Doctor. In school, in the playground, at meals, the eyes of the new pupil were always riveted upon his face. Surprise, doubt, curiosity, and fear were mingled in the boy's expression. But he spoke no word.

One morning, after midday school, the Doctor looked up from his desk and met the eyes that were for ever upon him. There was no one else in the "great" schoolroom. (Happily for Wilfred it was a limp-whisker day.)

"Come here, Pegram. What do you want? You seem anxious to ask me a question? Out with it, my lad. Remember, I am in the position of your father."

Still gazing intently, but without any hesitation, the boy asked—

"Do you use them for fishing, sir?"

"Use what for fishing?"

"Your whiskers, sir."

"My whiskers—for fishing! Good Heavens! No. Why should I?"

"Well, sir, I read in a book that the coon fishes with his. He lies down by the water and tickles it with his whiskers; the fish think they're insects, and come up to feed. Then the coon snatches them with his paw."

"Oh, the coon does, does he?" asked the Doctor, with ominous interest. "He fishes with his whiskers? Very interesting, no doubt. Absorbingly interesting. And little boys are foolish enough to think that their kind, indulgent masters resemble coons. All this is very impertinent, Pegram. It is not at all the thing for little boys to talk to—ahem!—their elders about whiskers. You must never do it again, Pegram. I think your researches in natural history have taught you that the coon possesses a paw. I, sir, possess a cane. Observe it. If ever you venture on another personal allusion, I will explain to you personally the use of the cane."

The boy hesitated. It seemed as though fear stifled a question.

"Do you understand, sir?"

"Yes—sir. I'm not to mention your whiskers."

"Never."

"Not to you—nor nobody else?"

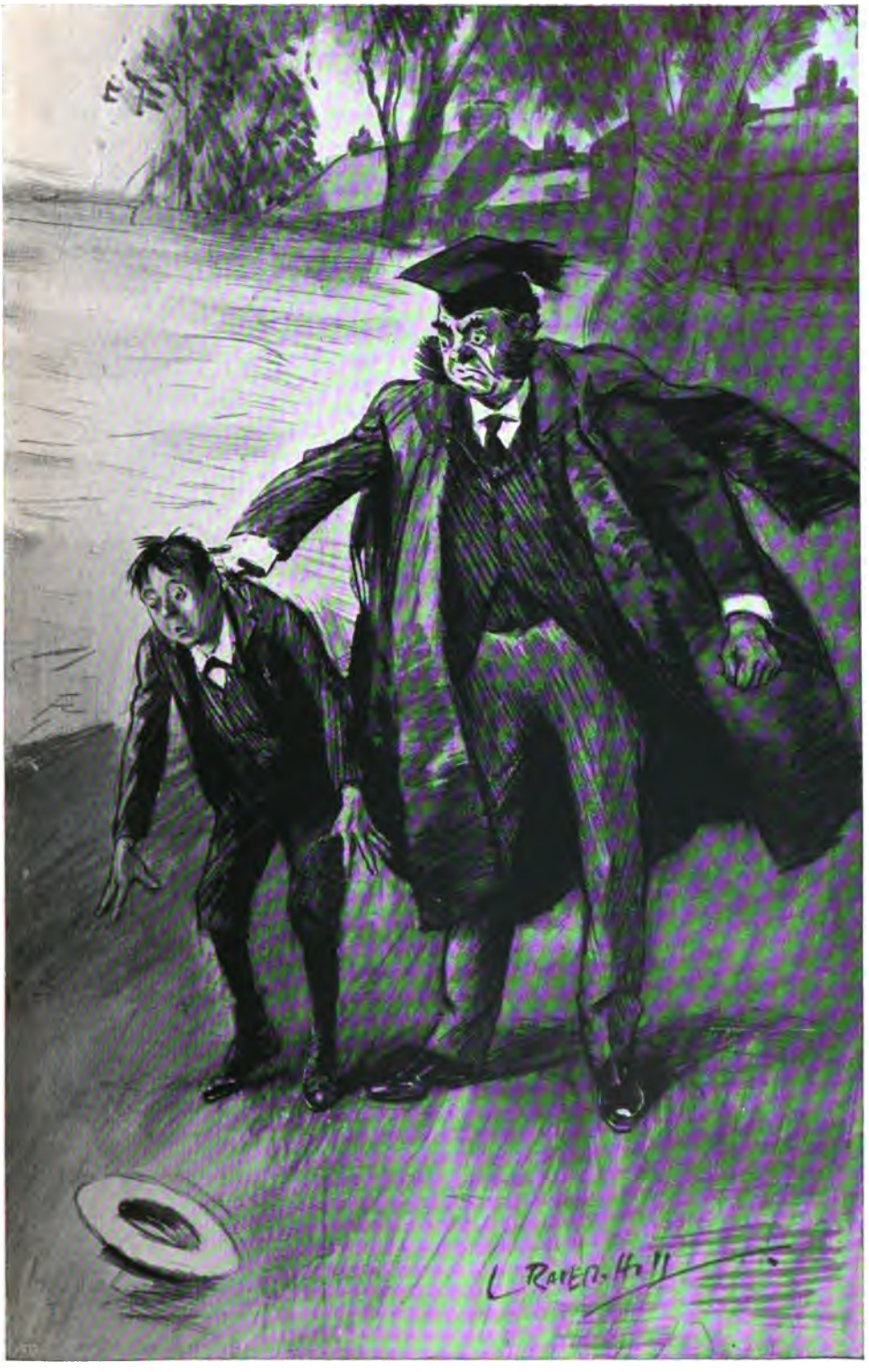
"To nobody. Good Heavens! Are my whiskers a topic of conversation?"

The episode ended.

Wilfred had been at the school for six days, and on the next his father would, according to promise, drive up and see him and receive a report on his manners and customs.

The Doctor was standing in the gravel "playground," watching the boys at chivy, when Wilfred, not without hesitation, approached him.

The boy gazed anxiously at the Doctor, noted that the whiskers had been brushed fiercely upwards, an omen of evil for him, and then spoke firmly.



"'Now, Pegram, come and be caned.'"

"I know why I'm not to speak to you about your whiskers—they're false!"

"What, sir?" roared the Doctor.

"False, sir—I bet you they're false!"

"You'll bet, will you? You'll bet with *me!*" he cried, with the expression of a jaguar in good health.

"I'll bet you a sovereign, sir, that they're false," he answered, with a touch of Casabianca worthy of a better cause. Here was the chance for the Doctor to obtain the whole sovereign at a stroke. Here, also, was the chance of administering a severe check to his pupil's betting proclivities. So the Doctor stifled his indignation.

"I accept your—bet, Pegram. I will satisfy you as to the genuineness of my whiskers."

"I must feel them myself, sir."

"You shall."

The Doctor bent down, and Wilfred took in either hand a huge, wiry, black whisker . . . There could be no two opinions—they were the home-grown article.

"Thank you, sir. I owe you a sovereign."

"I have it, Pegram. Now, Pegram, come and be caned."

* * * * *

The next day Mr. Pegram visited Sandringham House School, and the Doctor graphically described the result of his gamble, behaving after the manner of one expecting a word of praise.

But Mr. Pegram was silent. Suddenly he slapped his sponge-bags and laughed the joyous laugh of the sporting publican.

"He's done us! Willy's done us! You and me! Done us brown! The last words he said to me when I left him here last Thursday were: 'I'll bet you a fiver, governor, that before I've been here a week I'll pull the Doctor's whiskers.' 'Taken, you little devil,' I said. And he's made four quid on the deal."

THROUGH GOBLIN WINDOWS.

I LOOKED through goblin windows once,
I climbed three steps, and peered, and peered
I saw the Wise Man light his lamp,
With a diamond in his beard.
The Hobgoblins and Blackthorn Men
Sat sowing seeds in random plots,
And the cool wind blew them into flowers
Like white forget-me-nots.

I saw that ship come sailing in
Which has three sails of gold and white
I heard those steps come pattering by
That know all ways by day and night,
The Redcap Gnomes and Wonder-Wives
Sat nodding, nodding with bent head;
And through the gloom I saw three Kings
Steal supperless to bed.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

"My aunt said the other day that she didn't know what a rotter was."

BY

A BOY WHO KNOWS ONE.

YOU mightn't believe it, but my aunt said the other day that she didn't know what a rotter was.

A fellow, as a rule, hardly likes to acknowledge that he has ignorant relations; but I just wanted to explain how it happened that I thought of writing about rotters. It occurred to me that there might be other people, besides my aunt, who didn't know, and that they might be glad of information. I am always ready to give information, but more especially when I am paid for it.

What I said to my aunt was that a certain person (who is a great chum of hers) is a beastly rotter (which he is). She looked most awfully shocked and asked me to explain myself, and I did (being ever ready to oblige); but I couldn't make her understand.

A rotter is a chap who rots. You can't put it plainer than that, can you? But some girls are very dense; and the ones who are, get denser as they get older. She pretended she'd never even heard of anyone's talking rot in her life; but that was a bit too steep for me, and I told her flat that, at any rate, she'd often heard the person referred to doing it. This, I regret to say, had not a soothing effect; however, I was strong in the consciousness that I had done my best to be explicit.

Well, Dowson is the greater rotter in our school. If I can give you some idea of what he's like, you'll know what a rotter is; and then you will not be led by ignorance into asking foolish questions, like my aunt.

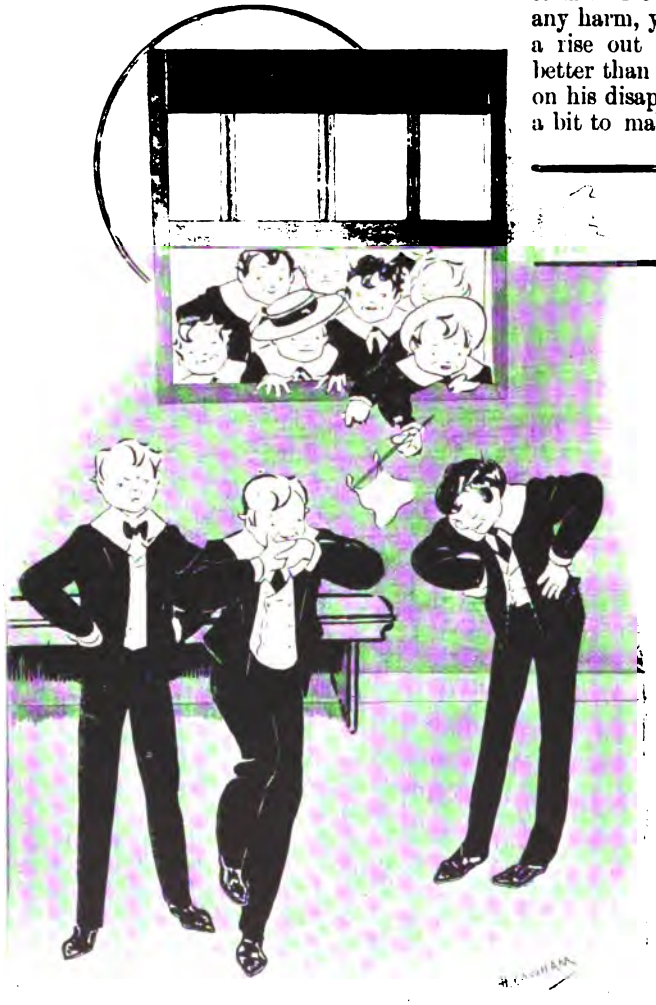
I am aware that some people use the word rotter to signify one who larks, teases, and humbugs; but, although this may possibly be its primary sense, we use it at our school in one rather more restricted (My hat! this is something like fine writing!), to mean a boy who is an ass and talks nonsense.

Dowson is, and does. He goes in for being superior. I mean morally superior. He couldn't pretend to be superior in any other way, because he isn't a scrap of good at either lessons or games, so would have nothing to show that would back his pretensions. Morals, of course, are different. Boys aren't expected to get prizes for them as they do for lessons and athletics, so they can have any pretensions they like in this line without being asked for proofs.

Dowson runs his moral show very easily. He does it by looking shocked when anyone does or says anything he disapproves of. For the first week of each term he isn't on speaking terms with Branscombe. The reason is that Branscombe's people always send him down, the Sunday before school opens, to stay for a few days with his uncle,

who lives near the school, and Dowson thinks it necessary to mark his disapproval of Sunday travelling in this way. Just as if Branscombe cared!

Sometimes a leg-before-wicket makes Partridge (that's the head boy) say a short, strong word; and if Dowson is anywhere



"He does it by looking shocked when anyone does or says anything he disapproves of."

near him when it happens, he puts his nose in the air and walks away as if he thought there was a smell of brimstone about Partridge.

Partridge rots him awfully (in the primary sense), but nothing of that sort makes any difference to Dowson. You can't take him down even half a peg, because he's so beastly well satisfied with himself. Partridge and Branscombe might sit on his head for an hour, but when they got off and let him up again, he'd be as sure as ever that he was cock of the school. Snubbing Dowson is like punching an air-cushion.

One day Partridge and Branscombe began saying a whole lot of rum things on purpose to draw Dowson. The things weren't really any harm, you know, only calculated to get a rise out of a chap who thought himself better than other people. Well, Dowson put on his disapproving face and shuffled about a bit to make them notice him; for, being such an ass, it never occurred to him that they wouldn't have done it at all if he hadn't been there. But they only talked louder and said rummier things than before.

At last Dowson's moral superiority couldn't stand it any longer. He got up, glaring at them, and said: "I'll thank you to remember who I am. My father is a clergyman."

"Don't mention it," said Partridge, cutting him short and waving his hand at him like a Johnny in a play. "I assure you, my dear fellow, we don't think a bit the worse of you on that account."

This made Dowson so mad that he couldn't speak. He could only choke and splutter and gurgle, and his face was turkey-red wherever it wasn't purple.

Just then Mr. Simpkins (that's the mathematical master) came into the room, and Partridge (being the head boy, and privileged) winked at him, so he tumbled to what was going on, and made a shocked face that was worth two of Dowson's.

"How's this?" he said, pretending to be greatly astonished. "We depend on you, Dowson, to set a good example to the whole school, and here I find you losing your temper and brawling in a most unseemly manner, evidently trying to provoke a quarrel with two perfectly good-humoured and inoffensive schoolfellows. Your father, whom I have heard you mention once or twice as an ornament to the clerical profession, would, I am sure, be deeply grieved

"And I hope my aunt will like him."

if he could see you making such a painful exhibition of yourself."

He might have gone on for ten minutes longer, Dowson being speechless and nearly in a fit, if Partridge and Branscombe hadn't guffawed out loud. They were doubled up tight, and had their handkerchiefs in their mouths, but even that didn't stop them; and Mr. Simpkins was obliged to use *his* handkerchief with great force and go away in a hurry. I and half-a-dozen other fellows were watching through a window and splitting. When we came into the room, Partridge and Branscombe were lying on the floor and rolling, as it might have been, in their death agonies, and Dowson was kicking them, which was mean, because they were so weak from laughing that they couldn't defend themselves.

Since then Dowson has never heard the last of his father's being a clergyman, but it doesn't do him a bit of good, and he's just as cocky as ever; and the worst of him is that he tries to be facetious. He couldn't make a real joke to save his life, but he makes the kind that my aunt's particular friend makes at temperance meetings, and he does it in the same patronising kind of way, as if he expected us to be obliged to him for taking the trouble to amuse us. Then, when we jolly well smack his head for him and tell him to shut up, he imagines we're jealous of his gifts as a humorist.

I know exactly the sort of thing he'll be when he grows up. He'll go to afternoon teas and make small jokes; and I hope my aunt will like him. It doesn't take much to please girls, so I have no doubt Dowson will be more popular with them than he is with boys, who aren't so easily satisfied.

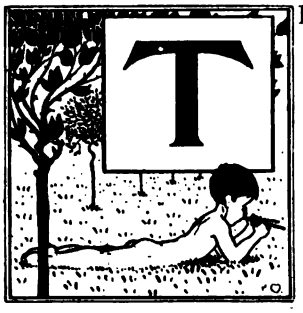
Now I've said all I can think of to explain by an illustration what I set out to explain, and I'm sure you must agree with me that rotters are a blot on creation and ought to be exterminated. Perhaps the next Government will decide that it must be done; and, if so, I think Partridge and Branscombe would like the job. They could begin with Dowson.

"I think Partridge and Branscombe would like the job. They could begin with Dowson."

IF YOUTH BUT KNEW.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

I.—THE GREEN ADVENTURE.



THE traveller sat upon the milestone just where the road, skirting the brow of the hill, branched off into the forest. At his feet lay the detached wheel; further away, in pathetic attitude, the remainder of the chaise itself. A stout bay, unconscious of as handsome a pair of broken knees as ever horse displayed, was tethered to a crooked stump of tree, browsing all the young grass and crinkled leaves within reach. The situation spoke for itself; and the young traveller's handsome face spoke for the situation, as eloquently as Nature, who had bestowed upon him a markedly disdainful and impassive set of features, would permit

Behind him rose the cool gloom of the forest. Below lay the plain, gold-powdered by the level rays of a sinking sun. Between the edge of the road and the forest margin ran a noisy stream. A thrush sang on the topmost branch of a fir-tree. But he on the milestone was blind to the gold of the valley, deaf to the gold of the song. "Now here's a pretty kettle of fish!" was all his thought.

To have been stuck a whole hour upon a stone, with a postilion ranging the country on horseback in one direction, and a valet a-foot in the other, and no help as yet forthcoming, not to have had himself within hail, all those weary minutes, one single human being . . . ! Between intervals of drowsiness he cursed the peaceful valley land, with its fair fields and orchards, as the most God-forsaken of countries.

Presently his moody eye quickened. On the road below, a moving object was approaching. 'Twas but a pedestrian, alas! Nevertheless he might prove of use for succour or advice.

But, as the oncomer drew nearer and began to foot the ascent, the glimmer of hope died in the discontented gentleman's heart. Here was no sturdy native, likely guide to smithy or village inn. 'Twas a mere ambulant musician, as strange, doubtless, to the country as himself. The sun-rays were even now glinting back, roseate, from the varnish of a fiddle. The traveller relapsed into moodiness.

At the steep curve of the hillside, man and fiddle vanished from view. Nevertheless, that he was still climbing, the advance, in interrupted measure, of a singular little tune, half sourdine, half pizzicato, soon proclaimed. It seemed at first so woven in with the babble of the brook, the deep choiring of the forest and the song of the thrush, that the young man on the milestone hardly realised its separate existence. But, as it hovered ever closer, he was forced to listen and even to follow. It was the very song of the rover—of the rover on foot, humble and yet proud, without a penny, without a bond, glad of the free water to drink and the hunk of bread by the roadside. A song of the nodding grass and the bird in the hedge, of the dancing leaf, the circling lark, the wide, kind skies. O, the road is full of gay things and tender things, of sweetness and refreshment, of wholesome fatigue and glorious sleep, for those that know its secrets!

"Good evening to you, young sir."

The little tune had stopped. A man's figure, exaggeratedly thin, black against the sunset, had suddenly emerged over the brow of the hill and, with a wide sweep, was saluting.

The gesture of the black silhouette seemed so courtly, the voice that came from it so refined, that the young gentleman almost rose to return the salutation; but in time he caught sight of the violin curves . . . Pooh, it was the fiddling vagabond! Ashamed of his impulse, he drew forth a florin and flung it.

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The musician skipped nimbly on one side; the coin fell, flashing in the red sun-shafts. He looked from it to the imperious donor and smiled, and his teeth shone as white as a wolf's in the deep tan of his face. Then off went his battered hat again and out was stretched a sinewy leg, in dusty blue stocking, to accompany a bow such as twenty years ago might have raised the envy of your finest Versailles marquis.

"I greet you! I salute you, my young lord!" The fiddler rose from his inclination and burst out laughing. "Cease fondling those pistols in your pocket, worthy sir," cried he, "for by Calliope, 'tis not your money-bags I covet just now, but O, your golden youth!"

"The fellow has a wild eye," thought the gentleman. Now it is a question whether even a highway robber were not more agreeable to encounter on a lonely road than a madman.

"If it be madness to honour in you such a gift of the gods," said the singular vagrant, reading the thought, "then am I mad, sir—stark, staring."

He fell back on one foot and bent the other knee, tucked his instrument under his chin, where it settled like a bird to its nest, and drew his bow across the strings with a long plaint. "O youth!" he intoned between two sighs of the catgut. "O spring! O wings of the soul! O virginity of the heart, expectation, unknown mysteries of life! O wealth of strength and yearning! See, now, how you sit," he cried, dropping into speech again, "on the fringe of the forest, in a strange land, with the sunset valley at your feet and the stream running you know not where beside you, and the bird over your head singing the desires of your soul. Why, by Apollo, young man, here are you in your youth, in the spring of the world, in the very middle of an adventure——!"

Again his limber fingers moved along the strings; and, with a sense of wonder, the traveller, despite himself, felt within his being an answering outcry.

"Harkee, my man," said he, trying to frown, "I am in no mood for fooling. Take up your florin and begone—or, stay, earn another by telling me if you can where I am, and how far lies the nearest village?"

"Sir," replied the other urbanely, "fellow-travellers should assist each other without any sordid consideration. (Ah, had you offered me of your youth, now!) We are, an it please you, just between the border of that old, steady-going principality of Schwarzburg and the new-fangled, patchwork kingdom which appertaineth to His Majesty King Jerome—himself the crowning product of the Great Revolution!"

"Faugh!" said the gentleman.

The fiddler's restless eye lighted.

"My lord is an Englishman? In verity and beyond doubt none but an Englishman could wear so lofty a front. I need scarce have asked."

The young traveller stared haughtily. The musician considered him awhile in silence and a sort of grave mockery, and pursued then reflectively:

"The English feeling, 'tis an excellent prescription for pride and disdain and such-like high essences. Only be careful, my brother-wayfarer, that you be not above your own fair youth, and contemn not its splendid opportunities.

"Singula de nobis anni praedantur euntes;
(O young man)
Eripuere jocos, Venerem, convivia, ludum——"

So saying, he shouldered his instrument, and with a valedictory wave of his bow seemed about to take his departure; but, as if upon a second thought, stood still and, once again, observed the traveller.

Now it began to strike the young gentleman that there was a dignity in the musician's gaze, a refinement about his person, which scarce accorded with the gipsy appearance, the shabby clothes; that it was not usual for beggars to quote Horace with delicate accents of culture; that his salutation had been a pattern of courtliness; above all, that he was not the least impressed by a young nobleman's most noble demeanour.

The latter personality, on his milestone, began to feel slightly foolish—an ingenuous blush crept to his cheeks.

The player hitched round his fiddle till it lay across his breast, and pinched a couple of strings as a man might pinch the cheek of the wench he loved. "*Pardi*," said he, speaking into its curved ear, "that flag of crimson would proclaim there's hope for the youth yet. Sir," said he then gaily, "I think I can be of use to you. I place myself at your service. May I crave to know whom I have the honour of addressing?"

"You address," responded the young man, "Steven Lee, Graf zu Waldorf-Kilmansegg, an Austrian gentleman (if you must know) travelling towards his estate in Carinthia." He had an irrepressible satisfaction in the recital.

"Austrian!" echoed the listener, with a

cock of one of his expressive eyebrows. "'Tis a safer nationality to proclaim than the English for travellers in great Cæsar's dominions nowadays. O, you are right, quite right! 'twould be the height of rashness to proclaim even a drop of English blood where Monsieur Buonaparte rules!"

The taunt struck home. Red mantled on the gentleman's smooth cheek.

"Despite my Austrian father, I have by my dead mother enough English blood in these veins," cried he, "to hate the usurper and despise his upstart brothers, and I care not who knows it!"

The fiddler's smile grew broader. "Youth, whispered he to his violin, "may abjure itself, but it will out. The stripling has spirit, though it be but the spirit of scorn. . . . . But the ceremony is not complete," pursued he. "I have now to return your compliment. Above all, let us be polite. Here, then, comrade, you see before you an individual known all over the country as the Crazy Musician, sometimes more tersely as Geigel-Hans—in your English, Fiddle-John. Some call me the Scholar Vagabond, and some—the children, bless them!—Onkel. Like your own, my nationality is a matter of indecision. Some say I am French, some German; some, from over the Alps—take your choice; your choice, too, of my title: Geigel-Onkel or Fiddle-Hans—or you may dub me, if you please, the Singer of Youth."

But by this time, Steven Lee, Count Kilmansegg, was disgusted with himself for having betrayed so much of his feelings to a beggar vagrant. "Doubtless," remarked he with infinite arrogance, "it may prove more convenient for you, at times, to hide your name, good fellow. Reassure yourself, I have no curiosity to learn it."

Whereupon Fiddle-Hans gathered his brows into so deep a frown that the whole hillside seemed to grow black. He struck the strings of his instrument, and they called out as with anger.

"My name," he said under his breath, "my name, boy, is dead—as dead as my youth." Then he grew calm as suddenly as he had stormed. "Some happy ones there are who die and whose names live; I live—and my name is dead. Let that suffice to you. Why, see!" he cried next, with another swift change of tone, while Count Steven stared at him, his slow Austrian blood, his deliberate English wits, unable to keep pace with such vivacity of mood: "it is dark; the sun has dropped behind the valley line; the forest is full of night already. Do not the lights of unknown shelter beckon you—the chimney-corner, the strange hospitality? Why, Heaven knows what sweet hostess may not greet your youth to-night! And if your soul cries not out for fair adventure in forest depths, here is at least a poor dumb thing that craves stable and corn."

He stepped, as he spoke, nimbly to the injured horse and unhitched the reins from the tree. "You might have bathed those cut knees," he exclaimed, shooting a look of rebuke over the animal's meek head, "with the kindly brook running charity at your elbow!"

He led the creature to the stream, and after a pause again turned to his companion and said with a smile, which seemed to show knowledge of all the latter's vacillating thoughts of vexation and shame—

"Lend me a hand with the wheel, comrade, and let us see if we cannot improvise a linchpin. And then, if you push behind, this forgiving beast will do his best to draw your goods into safety."

But it was the musician who mended the wheel, while the traveller watched in wonder the work of the brown hands. And then, in the falling dusk, they set upon their slow way: Steven Lee, Count zu Waldorf-Kilmansegg, pushing at the wheel even as bid, the fiddler marching ahead with the reins slung over his arm and humming a *chacone* under his breath.

From the stones and dust of the high-road he led the way along a wide path that seemed to cut the forest in two and run downhill into the horizon. Beneath their feet was now an elastic carpet of pine-needles; on each side of them the serried ranks of trees held the night already in a thousand arms and murmured to it with the voice of the sea; before them, at the end of the nave, set like a cathedral window, shone a span of sky, primrose and green, with one faint star. And presently Steven saw, to one side far ahead, an orange square of light, and knew it for the unknown forest-shelter beckoning to him.

"But what," cried he, struck by a sudden thought, "of my postilion and my valet?"

Fiddle-Hans looked back at him over his shoulder and grinned. He slid the reins above his elbow and grasped his violin.

"To the devil," it sang mockingly, through the glade, "to the devil with postilions and valets! to the devil with

"'I greet you! I salute you, my young lord!'"

prudence and forethought! O youth, enjoy your youth! O youth, be young!"

* * * * *

"Heaven knows," had said the musician, "what sweet hostess may not be waiting for you!"

To their knock the door was opened by a slip of a peasant girl, and the light from within shone on her long, yellow plaits of hair and her small, brown face.

Steven was conscious of a distinct shock of disappointment. What folly had this

fantastic chance companion fiddled into his mind that he should have found himself expecting something meet for his high-born fancy in this lonely forest-house?

"Geigel-Onkel!" cried the girl in surprise.

And "Geigel-Onkel!" was echoed joyfully indoors. A fat old peasant woman came waddling forward, hands outstretched.

"Be kind to my comrade, forest-mother," said the player, "while I see to this brother-beast." He led the horse towards the back yard; and Steven stepped in to the great kitchen, glad, at least, of its prosaic aroma of pot-herbs, since romance had fallen silent with the fiddle.

It was a long room, panelled and floored in oak, which reflected the light of the hanging brass lamp and of the ruddy hearth in jonquil flamelets and poppy glow. A black, oaken table, running nearly from end to end, was covered half way with a snowy cloth, red-hemmed and flowered. There were presses, laden with blue-and-white crockery and pewter. There was a tall clock, with a merry, painted face and a solemn tick. There were stags' horns and grinning boars' heads above the presses. Not that Steven had any interest in these things: he was glad that the place was clean. He thought the oaken chair hard sitting for his noble person; but it was better than the milestone.

The forest-mother seemed a decent sort of body, with a due sense, too, of the quality of her guest. As for the peasant child, he did not notice her at all—not even the pretty little foot in sandal shoe and scarlet stocking, of which the short peasant skirt gave such a generous display.

Yet it was to her that Fiddle-Hans made his courtly bow as he entered in his turn.

"Miss Sidonia!" said he, his old hat clapped over his heart. She gave him a smile, half shy, half mischievous. And her teeth were as white as his own in her sunburnt face—there was a whole host of dimples, too, which a young man might have remarked. But what mattered the dimples of a peasant girl . . . ?

Then the fiddler took the old woman round the neck and kissed her plump, wholesome cheek with a smack.

"Supper, supper!" cried he. "And if it's good, you shall have such music that your hearts shall sing."

The girl laughed out loud and ran to the hearth, where she seized a pot.

"In Heaven's name," cried the woman, "leave that, child! 'Tis not fit for you."

"O, please," urged Sidonia of the yellow plaits, "please, little foster-mother!"

Forest-mother she was to the fiddler, foster-mother to the girl . . . Steven had supposed her grandmother, but—— Bah!—as if, indeed, it were worth a thought!

"Get the wine, then," said the matron, with a jolly, unctuous chuckle. And while—swinging long tails of hair, scarlet ankles flashing—the girl darted round the table, what must this fantastic fellow Fiddle-Hans do but introduce guest and hostess with one of his absurd flourishes:

"Here, dear comrade, is Mistress Friedel, mother of the great King Jerome's loyal Head Forester. And here, dame, is a most noble Austrian Count, whom the accidents of travel have forced to condescend to the shelter of your humble roof this evening."

Deep curtsied Mistress Friedel. Steven inclined his head and, feeling the fiddler mock him behind his back, grew red and angry.

"A glass in welcome," tittered Sidonia at his elbow. She was so close to him that his cheek was fanned by her breath of clover; and the fragrance of a little bunch of violets in her white kerchief rose to his nostrils. As she bent, offering him the goblet of wine, her heavy plait fell against his shoulder. He drew back haughtily.

"*Diavolo!*" cried Fiddle-Hans, "how my fingers itch for the strings! But, never mind—you shall lose nothing by waiting. Gemini! mother, as I live, venison stew! What feasts you make in your forest-house!

"My son is hungry when he comes home of nights—and so are his lads. My little love, will you sit and entertain the gentlemen?"

Sidonia, pouting, drew her chair with great clatter round by that of Geigel-Onkel, and turned a shoulder on the Count, who thus remained isolated—as became his rank. The fiddler drank to her; she filled his glass again. And, as she stretched across him to do so, the violets at her breast fell upon his hand.

"Violets!" cried he, and sat as if turned to stone. His brown face grew ashen. Then he pushed his plate away, took up the flowers and pressed them against his lips, inhaling the scent of them with long, deep breaths. And presently the tears ran down his cheeks; and at last his slow-drawn sighs were cut short by a sob.

The girl started to the old woman's side and stood, flushed and downcast, while the forest-mother beat her omelet with a grave

countenance. Neither of them looked at the fiddler. Steven, who had stared, suddenly dropped his glance, too, ashamed and uncomfortable.

Fiddle-Hans got up from his seat: "I can eat no more to-night," he said in a broken voice. He walked over to the bench where he had left his fiddle and, hugging it, went out into the forest.

"Have you ever seen him like that before?" whispered Sidonia of Mistress Friedel.

"Once," said she, "over the violet-bed in the garden. I doubt he has seen trouble, poor soul! Who has not?"

Sidonia returned to her seat, propped her chin on her hands, and fixed the young Count absently. Her eyes were not black, as he had thought; they were grey and green, green and golden brown — like the waters of the brook in the shadow of the trees.

"Heavens, how you stare!" she said after a while pettishly.

The young aristocrat raised his disdainful eyebrows. He, stare at a country wench? Then into their sullen silence Mistress Friedel exclaimed joyfully:

"Hark!" cried she; "here comes my son!"

From far away stole the faint blast of hunting-horns; a dog bayed answer from the kennels, and the call of the horns arose again in the whispering forest depths—closer and louder.

"Yes, yes, it's the Return-home they're winding," said the old lady, bending her ear.

* * * * *

Without, there was now a fine clamour—barking and yelping of hounds, tramping of horses, blasting of horns, cheerful shouting of men. The Head Forester shot half his stalwart figure in at the door and nodded to his mother. As much as could be seen of his green uniform was very grand indeed, with vast display of gilt buttons and royal crowns, frogs and braid. His square, freckled face, all made for jollity, was puckered into anxious lines; his eyes roamed uneasily from Sidonia to the stranger. He strode to his mother's side and whispered in her ear.

"Be good to us!" she ejaculated, clapping her hands in dismay.

"Hush, mother!" warned the forester, finger on lip, and turned towards the door.

Count Steven had finished his plate of venison stew and was condescendingly enjoying a crust of bread and a glass of the tart wine. A sense of expectation about him made him now likewise turn round in his chair—languidly, for the high-born are not curious.

Outside, in the night, against a background of flickering leaves, under the glare of a couple of torches, he saw a picturesque group—hounds and huntsmen; two of these last laden each with a murdered roebuck, whose pretty, innocent head hung trailing on the ground. Suddenly the scene dissolved. A man came from the midst of the foresters into the kitchen; the rest disappeared with their booty; hounds and horses were led away towards the distant kennel-premises; the woodland glade resumed its peace.

As the new-comer passed him, the Head Forester made a spasmodic movement of hand to forehead, arrested midway rigidly, with a starting eye. His mother swept a dignified curtsy. Sidonia, her hands clasped at the back of her neck, stared with frank curiosity, her mouth open so that all who cared to look might wonder upon the doubled splendour of her young teeth.

He stood and glanced round upon them all; a slight, young man of somewhat low stature and dark, fine-cut face, with hair cropped short at back and side, to come down in a curly wave in the middle of his forehead. He had large eyes under thick, straight eyebrows; and his forester's uniform, though ostensibly of the same cut as Friedel's, was of finer cloth and obviously brand new. The collar of the coat rose very high on each side of his chiselled chin, which in the centre rested on folds of delicate cambric.

"Positively," thought Steven Lee, Count zu Waldorf-Kilmansegg, etc., "a gentleman like myself!"

But the hunter's first word dispelled the illusion.

"My friend," said he to the old dame—he spoke German with a strong foreign accent—"my fellow-forester there, Friedel, has assured me, ma'am, that you would give his brother-woodsman hospitality to-night." Now, as he smiled, his handsome face assumed a trivial, almost inane expression, which destroyed its look of breeding and caused Count Steven to return to his bread and wine with a lift of his scornful eyebrow.

"Any friend of my son is welcome here," said the old lady with an embarrassed smile. Friedel himself grew suddenly scarlet, gulped, blinked, and looked as uncomfortable as any fish out of water.

"I see I must introduce myself," cried the little man, laughing heartily and clapping him on the shoulder. "Mr. Forester—ahem!—Meyer, at your service, madam."

"I wish," said Steven, "that you would shut the door behind my back, good people."

"Hey, la!" said Mr. Forester Meyer, with a sudden imperious note in his voice, "whom have we here?"

"A guest, sir, like yourself," said the hostess somewhat drily, hieing to her pans, while the young nobleman in question twisted round his heavy chair again to supplement her inadequate description.

"An Austrian gentleman, my man, if it imports you to know," said he. "You are yourself, perhaps," he went on with more friendliness, struck by an obvious explanation of certain signs about the new-comer that had puzzled him, "the Inspector of these forests, sir, on your rounds. I notice you speak with authority, and your accent is not of the country—a countryman of this King Jerome?"

Mr. Forester Meyer broke again into loud laughter.

"Hey—what perspicacity has the gentleman!" cried he jovially. ("Friend Friedel, shut the door!) Nay—truly, sir, you are perfectly right. I see it would be quite hopeless to maintain an *incognito* before you. It is true, sir, I do inspect for this King Jerome occasionally. Ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha!" echoed Sidonia, catching the infection of mirth, as a child will, without reason.

"Hey, la! And whom have we here?"

Mr. Forest-Inspector repeated the phrase in very different tones. There came a curious flicker into his eye as he ran it up and down her figure, from crown of yellow head to scarlet ankle and back again, with appreciative pauses on the way. "Eh, eh!" said Mr. Inspector. He took her chin between his finger and thumb and chuckled as he raised the crimsoning face to the light.

"We do not hold with French ways here," said dame Friedel rebukingly, over her pan; and Steven, catching the gesture of warning which her son instantly addressed to her, felt a vast contempt for the fellow's slavish fear of his little superior.

The wine, thin and fragrant, must have gone somewhat fantastically to the young nobleman's brain. He began to feel defiant, in a humorous sort of way—to wish the fiddler back with his music. With a tune to marry with the amber drink, it seemed as if that youthship of his, on which yonder rogue laid such stress, might find some zest in a quarrel with Master Forester Meyer—whose eyes flickered so unpleasantly as they looked at the peasant child; who had so irritating a French shrug and so mean a smile.

But if he had an eye to a pretty girl, the Inspector seemed to have also an ear for a poacher. The distant crack of some shots, reverberating from the forest, now made him start and listen acutely. But as Friedel, with a frowning countenance, made a lurch for his gun in the corner, Mr. Meyer smiled and restrained him. Then he himself went to the door, set it ajar and hearkened. His smile widened as he closed it again and returned to the table.

"Doubtless he has plans of his own for trapping the poor wretches," thought Steven. It was the obvious explanation, and yet he felt a kind of mystery brooding around him, almost as if that adventure which the fiddler's music had boded were about to take place.

And, in the long silence which succeeded, the impression deepened. The Frenchman seemed overcome by an uncontrollable restlessness. He paraded the room from end to end, compared the merry-faced clock with his watch, stared out of the window and drummed on the pane. He was evidently keenly on the alert for something; and, as Steven vainly cudgelled his not very quick wits to conjecture—behold, it was at hand!

Shouts without, steps . . . a tremendous rat-tat at the door! . . . .

"'Tis not possible," cried Mother Friedel, "that Heaven has sent us more guests!"

This was, in truth, precisely what Heaven was doing—if, indeed, it were fair to hold Heaven responsible. Two new visitors walked into the forest-house without so much as a word of parley—a hulking man in forester's uniform ("By Saint Hubert!" said Steven Lee to himself, "His Westphalian Majesty's rangers seem thick as leaves hereabouts!") and a lady, clinging to his arm. . . . Yes, a lady—and a fair one! Steven rose to his feet.

The Inspector and the burly new-comer interchanged a rapid glance. Then, cracking the whip he held in his hand, the latter burst into the most execrable German, interspersed by volleys of French oaths. It was evident that King Jerome held to servants of his own nationality.

Parbleu! quoth he, a mercy to see decent shelter! Devil take all, he had thought that he and the lady would have had to spend the night in the forest!

Here the lady, in spite of very pink cheeks and bright eyes, became so faint that she had to be assisted to a chair by dame Friedel and her foster-child. Steven darted to

"Such a little way between his bent head and her upturned face . . . . !"

present a glass of water, but was arrogantly forestalled by Mr. Meyer.

"Such a scandal on His Majesty's high-road," went on he of the whip: "this lady's coach attacked by ruffians!"

"His Majesty will be exceedingly displeased," said the Inspector gravely, sitting down by the side of the distressed one and stripping off her glove to consult a delicate wrist.

"Her escort shot at—— By all the devils!"

"Monstrous," quoth the Inspector in quiet indignation. "A little wine, madam?"

"The escort — sacred swine, confound them!—took flight and basely abandoned their charge."

"Shocking!" said Mr. Meyer, relinquishing one pretty hand to receive the empty glass from the other.

"If I had not happened to hear the shots and rush to the spot—what might not have happened?"

"It makes me shiver to contemplate," asserted the Inspector.

"My brave deliverer!" murmured the lady in a dulcet voice. "Single-handed, he——"

She suddenly buried her face in her hands and quivered from head to foot.

The Inspector looked up at Mistress Friedel with an air of grave compassion. "Hysterical," said he. "And no wonder!"

Mistress Friedel began to loosen the lady's handsome, claret-coloured travelling-mantle, whilst Sidonia drew the velvet, white-plumed hat from the loveliest, dark, curling head in all the world.

"Well . . . ah!—Schmidt," said Inspector Meyer, "His Majesty will hear of your conduct."

"Thank you, Mr.—ah!—Meyer," rejoined the burly Schmidt, with an unaccountably waggish grin.

"Ah, ha, ha!" cried the lady. She flung back her head and flung down her hands, the tears were streaming upon her uncovered cheeks. It might be hysterics, but Steven thought it was the most becoming combination of emotions he had ever beheld.

She wiped her eyes and sprang up as lightly as a bird. Emerging from the folds of her cloak, she displayed a clinging robe of pale blue, fastened under the bust by a belt of amethysts set in gold. She had an exquisite roundness of form, an open, smiling mouth. Her eyes were innocent and dark and deep. She was (Steven felt) a revelation. And withal, what a great lady! What an air of breeding! what elegance! An Austrian gentleman knows the value of jewels—Heavens, what rings on her fingers! what pearls in her ears!

"*Ah, Dio mio!*" she cried, "but I am hungry!"

Italian, then. 'Twas a strange meeting of nationalities in the German forest-corner.

The fixity of the young man's gaze suddenly drew her attention. She looked at him: surprise, interest, then an adorable smile appeared on her countenance. 'Twas almost an invitation; besides, was it not meet that the only gentleman of the party should entertain the only lady? With his heart beating in his throat, he took two steps forward.

The three foresters had drawn apart and were whispering together with furtive glances at the stranger. It was not likely he should notice this, with her lovely eyes upon him. She dropped her handkerchief. He rushed to pick it up; as she took it from his fingers, he gave them ever so slight a pressure.

O Geigel-Onkel, Singer of Youth, hadst thou foreseen this rapturous moment?

"A thousand graces," murmured she. . . . The graces!—they were all her own.

"Permit me to introduce myself," he stammered.

But the Inspector cut him short with a strident voice.

"The gentleman must be fatigued," he cried.

Steven started angrily. To one side of him stood Forester Schmidt; to the other, Forester Friedel.

"I will show the gracious gentleman the way to his repose," said the latter, with subdued, yet warning tone, in his ear.

"And I will give you my help to the door, *tonnerre de Dieu!*" exclaimed the other, and caught the Count's arm under his with a grip of iron.

Steven wrenched himself free. Yet a man has not sober English blood for nothing. Humiliating as was the position, a moment's reflection convinced him that resistance would but render him more ridiculous still, and that in the light of those dark eyes.

"Lead, then, fellow," said he to Friedel, and, after bowing low to the lady, followed his escort with what dignity he could muster towards the door opening on the forest.

There was such a seething of rage in his brain, such an itching in his palm to feel it against yonder insolent Schmidt's full cheek,

that it was not till he found himself on the threshold of a dimly lighted wooden building, gazing blankly in upon heaps of straw, that he realised that a barn was considered good enough for the night's lodging of a Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg.

"May you rest sweetly, sir!" said Friedel, and tramped away.

* * * * *

"Comrades again!"

Turning round with a start, Steven beheld the crazy musician at his elbow.

"Comrades on the straw—eh! What a bed for his Lordship! *Misérables!* They have no idea of the importance of rank, these benighted forest-folk. Yet give me the clean, yellow straw, smelling of the sunshine in the dark, and whispering of the fields, rather than your stuffy mountains of feathers."

"Geigel-Onkel!" came a shrill cry into the night.

The fiddler turned with a bound and ran into the middle of the moon-lit yard, staring up at the outline of the house against the pale sky. From some distant regions, where Friedel's underlings kennelled near their hounds, rose shouts of boorish laughter and the chorus of a drinking song.

A yellow tongue of flame appeared in a wooden balcony, hanging under the roof. Sidonia bent over, shielding her candle from the forest airs.

"Are you there, Geigel-Onkel?"

"Yes, child."

"O, I am glad! . . . Geigel-Onkel"—she leaned over still further. Her tresses hung down, and one shone ruddy with the candle-gleam, and one silver in the moonlight. Her voice was broken with angry tremors—"he tried to kiss me!"

"Who?"

"The big man with the whip. He caught me by the waist. I had nothing to hit him with but my plaits. I lashed him in the face. They caught him across the eyes——"

"Caught him across the eyes," cried the fiddler, clapping his hands. "Ah, brava, little mamzell!"

"They whistled like a rope"—the girl was laughing and crying together—"I think I have half blinded him. Mayn't I come down to you, Onkel? I want to talk . . . and I want music."

"Better not," said Fiddle-Hans, and then from the shadow Steven stepped out beside him. It was terrible to think of the dark-eyed lady in the company of such ruffians!

Sidonia drew back at sight of him with a cry.

"Na, na; don't be afraid of him. It's only my comrade. As for the others—go in, child; bolt your door," said the fiddler, "go to bed and sleep in peace. I shall watch."

"But you will play for me?" she asked over her shoulder.

"Presently," said he: "such a tune, little mamzell, that will make some people dance! But to you it shall give sweet sleep."

As the girl disappeared, Fiddle-Hans turned upon Steven. He laughed as he addressed the youth, but his eyes were fierce as some wild beast's in the dim light. "Did you hear?" said he. "The maid struck him; but you—O you!—you let yourself be turned out! O, to see you come away like a lamb! Steven Lee, Graf zu Waldorf-Kilmansegg, turned out of doors by two low-bred foresters! What, then, runs in your veins? What turnip-juice instead of blood? The fellow, Schmidt so called, laid hands on you, did he not? and you a youth! By the blood of my fathers! had he touched me, old man as I am, he had felt the weight of his own whip! But the fellow has muscles—nay, you were right, sir, right. Let us be prudent, by all means. Only that mask of yours lies, that smooth cheek, that crisp curl. Young, yes, only your heart is not young. 'Tis like the kernel of a blind nut—dry dust; while I—there is more of God's youth left in my worn and waning body——"

"Confusion!" interrupted Steven, trembling in every limb, hurt to the marrow of his pride, "'twas before the lady."

"O, the lady . . . !" echoed the other with a mocking trail of laughter.

During the vehemence of his speech the musician had advanced on the lad, who had unconsciously drawn back until he stood against the wall of the house. Now a window close to him was unlatched, and the sound of a sigh, rather than a voice, was breathed forth into the night.

"*Ah, Dio!*"

"Your cue," mocked the fiddler into his ear, and melted away into the darkness.

The window was that of a room on the ground floor; the lady leaned out, her elbows on the sill; her face caught a slanting ray of moonlight. Was it possible to be so beautiful?

"Madam!" cried Steven, and that heart of his which was supposed to be but dry dust began to thump in hitherto unknown fashion.

"Hush, hush!" she whispered, a taper finger on her lip. "Ah! is it you, sir?"

He advanced into the ray that held her; he was not aware that he also looked very goodly and romantic.

Somewhere, in the darkness close by, the fiddler's bow crept over the strings. It was a sound so attenuated that it seemed to have no more substance than the light of the moon itself; it stole upon their ears so gently that it was as if they heard it not. His hand met her warm fingers—the fragrance from her curls mounted to his nostrils; she looked up at him and her eyes glistened.

O fiddler, what bewitching music is this? What sweetness does it insinuate, what mysterious audacity counsel? There were those parted lips of hers, with white teeth gleaming through, and here was this youth who had never touched a woman's lips in love. Such a little way between his bent head and her upturned face . . . !

A door crashed behind her. She started from his timid hand. The thread of the music was broken like a floating gossamer.

Steven thought that the fiddler laughed. There was a faint exclamation . . . Heavens! did she also laugh? He saw—yes, he saw the Inspector's hated outline over hers. She was drawn from the window by the shoulders, the shutters were clapped to in his face and bolted noisily. The yard billowed under his feet. All went red before his eyes. That was her room, and the man had followed her to it! Had he no youth in him, no blood in his veins? . . . Why, he could taste it on his tongue! He pivoted round upon himself, made a blind rush for the entrance-door, and dashed headlong against Ranger Schmidt's broad chest.

A French oath rang out; then the broken German: "Can he not see where he is going?" Then, in the dark, the fiddler laughed again—or was it his music? or were there lurking devils, taunting, jeering, inciting? The young man never knew exactly what happened, till a crack like a pistol-shot sprang upon the night, and he realised that his hand had found the broad, insolent face at last. The sound of that slap cleared the confusion in his own brain, as a puff of wind clears a hanging mist. Schmidt roared like a furious bull, but Steven met the onslaught of the uplifted whip with the science learned in London of Gentleman Jackson. And there was a grip on either side which began for him in glorious defiance and ended in a struggle of life and death.

And the fiddler worked his bow like one possessed. It was the fiercest song of fight that now rose, ever shriller, louder and faster, up towards the placid sky. The air was thick with the curses, blue with the profanity, of Forester Schmidt. But Steven wrestled like a gentleman, in silence. To his dying day he maintained that he was getting the better of the hulking bully, when his heel caught in an upstanding root and he feel with a crash, his opponent on top of him. There was a moment's agony of suffocation—the gleam before his eyes of a bared blade, gilt-blue in the moonlight—two echoing shouts, a woman's scream. And then Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg lost consciousness, his wits marching away at double-quick time to the lilt of an extraordinarily joyous little tune.

* * * * *

Steven opened heavy eyes and stared vacantly at the creeping light, indigo between the wisps of yellow straw; at the large square of shimmering mists and flickering leaves where the barn-door stood open to the dawn. He turned his head and found that it lay on a fragrant linen pillow; and also that it ached vaguely in spite of this luxury.

A vulgar, cheery, absurd tune was dancing in his brain. Then he found within his range of vision the figure of a man sitting cross-legged, putting a fresh string to a fiddle. And memory came back slowly.

"It was the fault of the music, you know," he said.

Fiddle-Hans shot a look at him from under his quizzical eyebrows.

"You never got that kiss, after all."

"Ah, but I got my slap in!"

The young man sat up, quite inspirited by the recollection, and found that, with the exception of a slight dizziness and stiffness, there was nothing much amiss with him.

"But someone very nearly got his knife into you," said Fiddle-Hans drily; "and there would have been an end of learning to be young. Nevertheless, you have capabilities—yes, some capabilities," he wound up his string, twanged it, and nodded over it.

A cock crew in the forest farmyard. A thrush was singing somewhere amid a babel of chirping birds. The breeze, balsam-scented, flew straight in from the pines and fanned Steven's head and throat. He lifted his hand to his open shirt and looked inquiringly at the musician. The latter nodded again.

"You were stunned by the fall," said he,

"'You never got that kiss, after all.'"

"with that brute on the top of you. 'Twas fortunate for you that I caught his hand at the right moment. And thereupon the little man ran out, screaming: 'No bloodshed, d'Albignac!' 'Tis his one good point—he is merciful of life."

"The little man? . . . . d'Albignac?" Steven echoed the words in wonder.

"You measured his cheek charmingly; I mean d'Albignac's," said the fiddler. "We two might do great things together yet. Aye, that was the d'Albignac, Chouan renegade; now Grand-Veneur—and Great Pandar—to His Majesty of Westphalia."

"Majesty? . . . . King Jerome?"

"Did you think," said Fiddle-Hans compassionately, "that Meyer and Schmidt were usual names for Frenchmen? Why, the *incognito* would not have deceived a cat."

The dawn was growing softly outside, but there was sudden vivid light in Steven's brain.

"Then, then," he stammered, struggling to his feet, "the lady——"

"The lady, my poor young friend, is naught but a little dancing-girl from Genoa, whom that wise and great man, the Emperor Napoleon, sent two emissaries to remove from her charming apartments in 'Napoleon's Höhe,' where her presence conduced neither to the King's dignity—nor to the Queen's. The great Napoleon is mighty particular about Her Westphalian Majesty's dignity. Our ardent little sovereign, however, determined to snatch a last meeting."

"O Lord!" said Steven, and passed his hand across his mouth, as if the shadow of the yearned-for kiss polluted it.

* * * * *

"And so that Meyer fellow is——"

"Our little Brother Jerome . . . yes."

The fiddler lifted a sweet, worn voice, while his bow danced lightly on the strings and chanted to the absurd lilt—

"Nous allons chercher un royaume
Pour not' p'tit frère Jérome. . . .

"'Twas the song of the soldiers before

Jena," he explained. "*Sapristi!* a taking, ragamuffin tune! When our friends last night heard it, comrade, they took to their heels."

And as Steven stared with ever-increased wonder, Fiddle-Hans proceeded in his mocking voice:

"The wicked flee when none pursueth. If there is one person the little King is frightened of, 'tis the great Emperor. Big Brother keeps an eye on him from the midst of victory—many eyes on him, indeed. And little Brother has taken into his head that your humble servant is the most cunning of Napoleon's eyes. I had but to play such a simple air, you see, and His Majesty of Westphalia . . . his choice circle . . ." He made a wide gesture and a sound mimicking a flutter of wings: "Phew . . . ! Gone, scared, like frightened sparrows!"

"Gone?" said Steven; and though she was but a dancing-girl from Genoa, and a baggage at that, his heart sank.

"Gone," said the fiddler, "gone before the dawn. So is Sidonia. Aha, Sir Count, short skirts, it seems to you, make the peasant, and fine jewels the great lady! Ha, ha! to see your Lordship draw away from the touch of her tresses! She brought you her own pillow last night, and wept over you and thought you were dead—till I bid her put her hand over your heart and feel its solid beating. 'Tis a noble child . . . and a greater race you will not meet in your travels. Why, 'tis the Heiress of the country. O, there were no lies about her! The girl visits her foster-mother for a freak and a treat now and then—you never looked at her foot or her delicate eyebrow; she was but a peasant girl, *pardi!* But Jerome——"

"Jerome!" echoed Steven, and he knew not why, the fiercest spasm of anger he had yet felt seized him then.

"Jerome pinched her chin, as you saw," said the fiddler, "and, therefore, back we packed her, Friedel and I, to her own castle, for safety. . . . Meanwhile you slept. Come, come, never look so downcast," he went on with a sudden change of tone. "Is it not instructive to know how the King of Westphalia passes his time while all the manhood of his country is warring for the Empire—burnt in Spain, frozen in Russia? . . . And, at any rate, have you not had a night you will remember out of all your dull, regulated youth? Come forth and I will show you something I warrant me you have never seen before: sunrise in the forest."

The yard seemed very silent and empty. They were all gone indeed, gone like a dream!

"Come," said the musician, "look up. Have you ever seen so limpid a blue? Look at the trees enveloped in mystery; see the silver shine of the dew over every blade; hark to it as it drips from leaf to leaf. 'Tis every day a new creation! O, I could make you Dawn-music, if there were not such music already for you to hear! Hark, what a whispering, what a lisping, what murmurs! Do you hear the birds—that is your last night's thrush at the top of the larch-tree; he is singing under his breath now, watching the horizon; he will shout when the sun leaps up. Do you hear the humming of the bees?—there is thyme in mother Friedel's garden—and that is the sharp tinkle of the brook over the stones—eh, my soul, what a symphony! . . . The breath of the forest, do you feel it, cool and living? The savour of the crushed, dew-drenched moss under your feet, do you taste it? and the smell of the young beech-buds and the incense of the pines? And now watch, behold how the forest is lit up as with inner green fire! Dark and colourless stand the trees nearest to us. Look within, how the flame grows, how it spreads, live gold, live emerald! And see there—O, the scarlet on those fir trunks! The sun has risen! . . ."

The fiddler stopped speaking. Looking back upon it, Steven afterwards wondered if he had spoken at all, or had only made his thoughts felt. But here certainly his strange companion came to a standstill in their slow wandering and took off his battered old hat and waved it.

"Farewell!" said he. "Mother Friedel will give you breakfast, and son Friedel is already on the look-out for your lost retinue. Farewell, noble Count! remember to be young!"

"Shall I never meet you again?" cried Steven. His heart sank unaccountably and he added hesitatingly: "Comrade?"

Fiddle-Hans, moving away into the forest with light, fantastic step, paused wistfully.

"Who knows?" said he over his shoulder. "If you know how to seek . . . why . . . who knows?"

He plunged down an opening in the trees, where the sun made a golden path before him, and the budding larches on either side were on fire with green flame.

·CHRISTMAS·EVE·
·THE·BIRD·OF·DAWNING·SINGETH·ALL·NIGHT·LONG·
·AND·THEN·THEY·SAY·NO·SPIRIT·CAN·WALK·ABROAD·
·THE·NIGHTS·ARE·WHOLESOME·THEN·NO·PLANETS·STRIKE·
·NO·FAIRY·TAKES·NOR·WITCH·HATH·POWER·TO·CHARM·
·SO·HALLOWED·AND·SO·GRACIOUS·IS·THE·TIME·
·SHAKESPEARE· ·HAMLET·ACT·I·SCENE·I·

THE LONE HAND.

By H. C. BAILEY.*

IT befell in the *mêlée* of the joust at Dent that a certain knight—and the name of him I conceal, for charity—foully stabbed Sir Bertram's steed. You will guess that Sir Bertram fell. Since he was ever a man of resource, he contrived to fall upon that treacherous knight, whereby he broke no more than his left arm and the knight's base neck. Now all that—you will find it engrossed over many pages in the Chronicle of D'Aylesford—has no more to do with the story than this: it explains why Sir Bertram, riding southward through the marches of Wales a six hundred years ago, bore his left arm in a sling.

See him, then, as the autumn sun swings to the west, clad in glistening grey steel, on his war-horse, Pepin. His helm clangs at his saddlebow. Black curls and brown bull-neck are bare. Behind him, hanging from those mighty shoulders, a shield argent bears three roses gules. But do not heed the red roses nor dream of heraldry. Mark the frown on his brow and the broadening nostrils as he turns to gaze on either side.

For the land is black as the plains of Sodom after God's fire fell. The biting reek of smouldering wood and leaf is heavy in the air. Nor hut nor hovel shows above the dismal earth, nor live man nor beast. In the copse the trunks are blackened and the leaves shrivelled and brown. Through the dark ashes, scant as hair on a dotard's head, sickly weeds are sprouting. The very brooks run grey and stink. All is desert—ghastly, man-made desert, wherein the relics of life are still over-plain. Beasts killed for wantonness and with torture—aye, and men and women lying—well! it matters not how: they were dead a six hundred years ago, when Llywellyn ab Gruffydd was prince in Gwynedd.

Sudden Sir Bertram looked westward into the sun's eye—westward and long. For he saw the glint of steel, a knight who was riding into Wales, a knight who bore no device.

"*Holà!*" cried Sir Bertram. "*Holà*, Sir Knight!" But the other looked backward a moment, then set spurs in his steed; and while Sir Bertram shouted, faster he rode, full westward into Wales. "*Feu noir d'enfer!*" Bertram muttered, "a churl!" Then, being charitable, he repented. "Haply he makes a lone raid—for greater glory. St. John speed him!" and followed a malison on the rogue robbers of Wales.

Then the sun sank golden in a primrose sea. Grey cloud-banks massed across the sky. Pepin was spurred to a trot, while Sir Bertram prayed to St. John o' Beverley for the grace of supper, being little like to find one. He rode a mile more or twain, and the colour was gone from the sky before he came to a hill and saw towers frown at him from on high.

Up the hill went Sir Bertram by a path that made Pepin snort and Sir Bertram swear—up till, sooner than they had counted on, they hit on a wall in the gloom, and Pepin slipping, struck sparks from the rock, and hoof and mail clanged loud. But no one gave challenge from the walls.

"Good watch, *pardi!*" growled Sir Bertram, and Pepin and he felt their way along till they came to a gateway. Sir Bertram came down clanging, and found the horn and blew a mighty blast. Wall echoed rattling to wall, and again and fainter the blare was borne till all was still. Pepin shivered. "The Castle of Death!" Sir Bertram muttered, and blew again and louder.

A loophole opened in the gate: a beam of light shot out.

"Who calls?" said an old man's voice.

"A knight of the King's House prays bed and board." The bolts rattled and the chains. Sir Bertram, and difficultly Pepin, came through a wicket-gate to a great court-yard and the lanthorn. Then was a cry checked suddenly. The seneschal's jaws were shaking. At something he was much amazed.

Sir Bertram was set in the hall: "Now, by good St. John," quoth he, "I am come to the strangest of castles," for the place was

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vast as Chester and bare of men as a villain's hut. Master Seneschal was infinite zealous a while, then left him in a hurry. On beef and ham Sir Bertram did execution, spite of one hand idle. And he poured great draughts of strong ale into him, and his spirit was uplifted. The seneschal gone, he poured a half of it, and then desire came upon him to sing. Full-voiced he roared—

"To the shield and the helm and the white o' the brand,
Down derry, down derry down!
To the steel o' the lance and the might o' the hand,
Down derry, derry derry down!"

There is a great deal of that catch, and Sir Bertram chanted it to the rafters till he was tired. Then he drank off the ale, sighed, and began to look about him. There was little to see, and little light to see by. So he heaved himself out of his chair and stalked across the hall. Straightway he came upon something — something that smote his shins, over which he stumbled and swore. It was the steel handle of a curtal axe. Sir Bertram grunted and took hold of it and heaved. There happened nothing. Even after supper he was a man of method, so he took one torch from its socket, and by its aid considered that axe. The helve of it was buried in a block of black bog oak.

"So!" said Sir Bertram, and put back his torch. "Now, Master Axe," and he took it half way up the handle with his one hand and set his foot on the wood. The great back began to work; slowly, slowly it rose, with hard breathing and groaning of the wood, till a jerk of the arm made an end, and Sir Bertram stood erect and puffed out his chest. His grip on the axe he shifted a little way, then made it sing about his head, and he laughed aloud.

"He let her feel a trifle of the weight."

still he ate mightily and drank. There was much room in him.

"The fact is, one can hold but what one can," said Sir Bertram at last, and emptied the horn of ale. His doublet was undone, and he leant back in his chair and sighed. "But *pardi!* liquor may go where victual may not," said he, and he filled the horn again. Down

"*Cœur de Lion!* Master Smith knew his trade," said he, for, despite the massy helve, it was balanced so that it swung easily as a stave. He took it to the light. The steel staff of it was chased and inlaid with gold in strange, curling patterns. Graven, too, was the helve, and there, all dull with the stain of the wood, were letters—

> Ylye handis two for bow of yewe,
> Handis two for shielde and brande.
> Gyf Burnstane neede ane lustye deede,
> Seeke ayde of knight's lone hande.

"Now by'r Lady, a goodly rhyme," said Sir Bertram, and began to play tricks with that axe. He lunged, and his mailed foot clashed on the stones, and the axe came whistling down on the ham—to be stopped, to be lightly turned, to cut a delicate slice. This way and that way he sprang, his greaves clashing, and the axe sang shrill.

"Aoi!" he roared. "Aoi!" for the Norse blood ran in his veins, and the passion of battle was on him. "Aoi!" Then sudden he heard a shrill cry.

"The axe, my lady! the axe!" The axe was checked in a whistling curve. Sir Bertram turned on his heel. There was more light in the hall. Down the midst of it came a lady, a lady all in white; beside her two maidens held each a lamp. The old seneschal led the way. But he was turned towards her—and his wrinkled face in the light was wild, distorted with joy.

Sir Bertram was much ashamed; bethought him of his undone doublet, his dusty greaves, his dishevelled hair—of many things untoward, and found nothing better to do than bow. The lady was of a tall and stately beauty; framed in golden hair, her face was white and thin.

"Welcome to Burniston Castle, sir."

"Grammercy, lady."

"Great thanks for little boon, sir. It grieves me that Burniston can give no better cheer. What we have is gladly yours."

"Lady, I ask none better. No cheer more hearty." And again he heard the old man mutter tremulous in her ear—

"The axe, my lady! the axe!" But she stayed him with a gesture.

"And all is yours while you need it, sir."

Bertram bowed. "Not soon shall I forget Burniston's good cheer. Happy are you to be its lady—happier I deem its knight." Whiter yet the pale face grew; the thin lips lost their blood. She turned from him trembling. Her handmaids stayed her from falling.

"A good-night," she stammered, and was gone.

Sir Bertram sat down heavily. "Art a fool, a fat fool, Bertram," said he aloud; then from another door saw a little child in her white nightdress run in.

"*Maman!*" she cried; "oh, *maman!*"

"Loud laughed Red Iorwerth, pulled from his bosom a leather bag, and let Sir Roger see jewels gleam in his hands."

"She is gone," said Bertram in his deep voice. The child started; then put a finger in her mouth and looked at him.

"Hast pulled out our axe," said she. "Give to Alys!" she ordered, and held out her little hand. He let her feel a trifle of the weight. "Oo! heavy!"

"And are you Alys, lady?"

"Of course I is Alys. Like my *maman*. My *bon-père* 'ould not let me have uvver name. Dost know I has just seen my *bon-père?*"

"And why should you not, lady?"

"My *bon-père* was lost." Bertram laid down the axe and drew her to him, and she came with good will. He was strong, and his arm was warm and his eyes were steady.

"Little lady, stupid I am; but your knight. Will you tell me?"

"For sure I will tell. Hast good eyes. The Welshmen, bad Welshmen, took *bon-père*. Red Iorwerth. He was with Sir Eustace, and Sir Eustace came back alone. I does hate Sir Eustace. And we has tried to get back *bon-père*—but never, no, never; and *maman* has been so ill—why dost frown so, sir?"

"It is in my mind that I have played the boor," Bertram muttered.

"Those eyes is good," said little Alys. "But I saw *bon-père* now, you know, by my bed, and I came to tell *maman*. And dreams is true."

"Mary grant it!" said Sir Bertram.

"I guess thou art very strong?" said Alys. "Art not so strong as *bon-père*, dost know; and art not as pretty as my own *maman*." Bertram laughed.

"Little lady Alys, I am but a poor fool with one arm."

"It is a very big arm," said Alys, trying to span it in vain with her two hands. "And so hard." Then came a maiden much distraught, hunting for Alys, who, ere she was taken, must needs kiss Sir Bertram, whereat that large knight was much ashamed, and the nurse giggled.

Now, it is upon record that when the seneschal came to that hall in the morning, he found no more of Sir Bertram than all his outer mail and his sword, and a scrap of parchment whereon was written—

"Sir Bertram prays pardon of Dame Alys of Burniston for mal-courtesy and outrecuidance, and doth most humbly entreat that she forgive him who doth not forgive himself."

The axe was gone.

If you seek aright, you may still find among the bracken scattered stones of Llanbedrog Tower. When Iorwerth ab Dafydd dwelt there, it stood square and grim and grey on the top of its hill, a very safe house for robbers. It is set in a land of blue crags; to come at it you must needs cross or evade a pair of deep ravines, so that when the hilltop glowers close above you, you find you have yet to go round a mile. But our good Iorwerth and his swarthy tribe were men of resource, and they had spanned their ravines with two rough bridges, slung from crag to crag by ropes of raw hide—most awful to dizzy heads. When the Lords Marchers came forth to chasten Iorwerth—when Sir Eustace of Quattford led a band to rescue Roger of Burniston—the bridges were drawn betimes. The Lords Marchers must needs sit down before Llanbedrog and wait for Iorwerth to starve. He was very long a-starving. Sir Eustace, burning to save his friend, had tried an assault up the bare hillside. And very ill-hap met his men.

Over the blue crags in the autumn twilight came a knight in armour of proof. No device he bare on shield or harness. He appeared happy. For he turned back to Red Iorwerth, watching him from the tower gate, and waved his sword in the sunlight. Then, quickly as the evil path would suffer, he rode eastward to England.

Now, the torches were flaring smoky in Llanbedrog hall, and Iorwerth's men were gathering at the tables. Swine's flesh, salted and fresh, steamed in great wooden platters, and one of Iorwerth's tribe—his name was Gruffydd—took a slice on his dagger and poked it in the face of a man who was chained to the wall by his hands and his ankles. This wretch's hair and beard were matted; very foul he was, and his clothes were falling off him. About his neck hung a pair of golden spurs. So Gruffydd mocked him, wrenched open his mouth, and stuffed in the meat, then after it one of the spurs, and laughed at the wretch spluttering with bleeding lips. They all laughed, and loudest from the doorway rang the mirth of Red Iorwerth, a sturdy dwarf of flaming hair. About his neck and his wrists golden chains were bound. Loudest he laughed, and the sound of it echoed strangely, while without a crag went crashing down to the ravine.

"Aye, give a meal," said Red Iorwerth in Welsh. "'Tis his last!"

At that the laugh rang out again, and at

once the rabble fell on the captive again, and stuffed his mouth with foul food and buffeted him till he gulped it down. Iorwerth must laugh at that. Then thrusting his knaves aside, he walked up to the chained knight and plucked him by the beard.

"Ah, Roger! fool Roger!" he says in French. "Hast had a year of bliss. Comes an end, Roger. In the morn is thy lady widow and the girl-child orphan."

Sir Roger answers him no word.

"Never grieve, Roger. Faith! 'tis for her good you die; she begs your death—nay, Roger, by the bones of Arthur! buys it. Fool! White Alys is light of love as the rest! Fool and double fool! Ha! that irks! Aye, fool! she gives red gold for your blood, that she may lie with honour in Eustace's trusty arms."

Sir Roger was all trembling, like one stricken of palsy. Loud laughed Red Iorwerth, pulled from his bosom a leather bag, and let Sir Roger see jewels gleam in his hands.

"The wife of thy bosom, thy trusted friend! Think, Roger; taste it!"

And Sir Roger's face was working wildly, for he saw among those jewels a spray of sapphire and pearl—his first love-gift to Alys. Tears welled in his eyes. Iorwerth snatched a torch to see them.

"He weeps! he weeps! By Llywellyn's heart, we have touched him at last! The brute can feel! Eh, Roger, does it rankle? Bah! see how tender she is of thy honour and her own!—she must buy thy blood ere she will yield herself to——"

Sudden came a shriek in Welsh.

"The face—the face at the window!" So cried Gruffydd, pointing; and Iorwerth swung about, and all ran crowding to the window. There was nothing; all was dark, and the cool night wind met their faces.

"Drunken fools!" cried Iorwerth, smiting right and left.

"But I saw. Black beard——"

The door burst open, inward crashing. Adown the hall charged a giant, black-bearded; over his head an axe was swinging. Full at Sir Roger he ran. Or any could stay him, the great axe had crashed down twice on the chains, and Sir Roger was free.

"Run for thy life!" he muttered, and sprang at the Welshmen and smashed home a sweeping blow that sent the front rank reeling. Then with the back swing of his arm came another, and "*Maison du Foy!*" he thundered—"the King's House!" and sprang back two yards, while Sir Roger stumbled to the door. The Welshmen hung back chattering. That cry was ominous. Sir Bertram gained the door ere they ran at him. There he stood an instant, dealing blows all around him, and blocked the threshold with their bodies. Then on a sudden he turned and ran like a hare in the darkness. Sir Bertram had no shame for seasonable flight. In an instant he was by Sir Roger's side, had thrust a dagger in his hand.

"The bridge!" he mutters, breathless; but scarce had they gained the farther side of the first when Iorwerth was hot upon them, and Sir Bertram turned to bay.

Iorwerth had a thrust home in his side, but the sword-point slipped on the chain-mail beneath the doublet, and Bertram, turning craftily, let the Welshman stagger forward, and had a fair down cut at his neck, and the red, grinning head rolled down the crags, and the body fell, spurting blood. Back sprang Sir Bertram a yard for room, and drave sweeping strokes that cleared the bridge-head. Short dagger and sword were of no avail against the long arm and the longer axe. They could not come at him, and still right and left, swift as a swallow, the dripping blade whistled.

"*De par Dame Alys!*" he roared; "*de par Dame Alys!*" And then to Sir Roger, crouching by him, waiting with ready dagger for who should come within the sweep of the axe: "*Tranche les courroies!—vite! vite!* Cut the thongs!—quick! quick!" he muttered.

The Welshmen were crowded, pushing and snarling, on the bridge. While the good axe and the lone hand held the path, Sir Roger in the darkness hacked at the leather thongs, till sudden there was a creak and a snap, and wild yells as the Welshmen felt the planks fall beneath them, and the horde fell screaming into the dark abyss. Bertram let a shout out of him—

"The King's House, Welshmen! the King's House!" and turned and ran from the gulf that vomited shrieks. Over the second bridge they sped, and with two blows of his axe Bertram broke it behind them. Then through the sling of his left arm he thrust the dripping axe and slipped his right arm about Sir Roger, whose limbs, unused for many a month, were stumbling amid the crags. Awhile they ran on, till Bertram whistled low and checked his pace. Pepin came.

"Now mount, Sir Roger, and hey for Burniston!"

Sir Roger wrung his hand. "You, Sir——"

"To wit, one Bertram, of the King's House, knight"

"—Sir Bertram, God knows, all thanks are——"

"Needless, *pardi!* What, sir! was I loth to come? Not I!"

Again Sir Roger tried to thank him.

"Back sprang Sir Bertram a yard for room, and drave sweeping strokes that cleared the bridge-head."

"Oh, grammercy, Sir Roger! but what need of words? We be knights both. So in need had you come to me."

And Sir Roger mounted and moved on a little way; then in a low, quavering voice: "Sir, you cried '*De par Dame Alys!*'" he said.

"That did I," says Bertram deep in his chest, and looked up, and his eyes shot fire. "*Pardi*, sir! I said truth. Now, Sir Roger, no spy I am, but something of Iorwerth's words I needs must hear. Could you dream a moment they were true?" And after awhile—

"God forgive me! I am shamed," says Sir Roger. . . . "Ah, sir! God requite you, for I can never."

"Faith! you talk too high. I am paid already, Sir Roger. There was a brave little maid sat on my knee in Burniston hall and kissed me 'Good night.' Wages enough. Nay, *pardi!* and more; for, truth to tell, 'twas a mirthful fight!" And they went on through the darkness.

Dark it was still when they were climbing Burniston crag, and Sir Bertram went first to blow the horn. Came after long waiting the seneschal, saw Bertram, flung wide the gate, and cried aloud—

"Alas, Sir Knight! a——" But he cried no more. For good reason: Bertram's hand was over his mouth. Bertram was whispering in his ear—

"Hush, man, hush! Who has come to-night?"

"Sir Eustace, sir—and with dolorous tidings."

"Humph!" says Bertram. "Alone?"

"All alone." Then Sir Bertram laughed grim. "But he saith Sir Roger is slain. Oh, good my lord! . . . he hath come but now, and my lady . . . for her lord is slain——"

"Now see me raise the dead," says

Bertram. He whistled to Pepin. He took the seneschal's lantern and held it aloft. Through the gate came the great war-horse, and the seneschal, peering timorous, saw the rider's worn face and his matted hair, and yet knew his master and fell on his knees sobbing. A moment Bertram left them together while he stalled Pepin, then, hurrying back, found them laughing, chattering wildly.

"Now, sirs, now! Sir Roger would see his lady, and I—— Well, go in!" Into the hall they went, and through it to a smaller room, the while hearing sobs and a smooth voice.

"Nay, Alys, 'tis over late to grieve. The rogue Iorwerth hath slain him. What use in tears? We have done all that might be to save him. Nay, here you yourself are not safe. Come presently to Quattford, and there find nest. Come, dear!" But the lady had buried her face in her hands. "We must be gone betimes, Alys, dear. We—— "

"And why? Why now? What more can the Welshman do?" she cried. "They have had all!"

"Aye," says the smooth voice. "All—but one thing. They seek your child. Alys, trust me, then, for I——"

Arose Bertram's voice—

"I seek a certain knight—a knight bearing no crest on his shield—a thin knight, a little knight—a knight that gave certain jewels to one Iorwerth by Llanbedrog brig. *Pardi!* I find him!" Springing at Sir Eustace, he caught the knave by the neck; but past him broke Sir Roger, and he in his rags and his filth, his lady all in white, were locked in each other's arms. By the neck, speechless in that dolorous grip, Sir Eustace was borne backward. His eyes swelled out of his head.

"*De par le Roy*, Sir Eustace!" says Bertram very quietly; and "Master seneschal, be there dungeons in Burniston?"

"But, sir——"

"The King's Justice," says Bertram, and Sir Eustace was left in a damp cell to think on his deeds.

Sir Bertram, coming back to the upper air, was beset by the Lady Alys and Sir Roger, and Dame Alys must needs kiss his hand and cover him with shame. The child saved him. Roused by the noise, she came pattering over the stones in her white nightgown, and was caught and kissed and kissed. After a while she was put in Bertram's arms.

"I 'ants to fank thee," says Alys. "I 'anted my *bon-père*. My dreams is true, dost see. I like thee. I fink thou art nearly as pretty as my *maman*. I'll kiss thee, please, please," and she did. "Please is thy bad arm getting well? Dost fink if I was to kiss it?" says Alys anxiously; and because she wished, he let her.

"But the Lone Hand serves," said Sir Roger.

"Aye," said Bertram, and stepped to that block of oak and whirled overhead the axe and crashed it down and buried it deep as of old.

Now when, in the morning, the men of Sir Eustace came seeking their master, it was Bertram who spoke with them in the gate and said that their master (who was detained) had need that a letter should go to Chester. And they took it—a letter to the Earl of Lincoln, Justiciar of the Northern March, which brought that choleric soldier in a tempest of wrath to Burniston. And that was very ill for Eustace of Quattford.

"WHEN THE AFTERNOON IS OLD."

WHEN the afternoon is old
And the tree-tops are a-flush,
When the deepening dying gold
Lingers on the sunset thrush;

Then beside the hidden stream
In the solemn evening air,
Nora, standing in a dream,
Gathers wildings for her hair;

Thinks, how when the gloaming deep
Dims the pastures far away,
Wending with the homing sheep,
What her lover's lips will say:

So, beside the wimpling stream
In the solemn evening air,
Nora, standing in a dream,
Wreathes the wildings in her hair.

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

BUFF-BACKED HERON.

HERONS AND HERONRIES.

DESCRIBED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY R. B. LODGE.

OF the six species of Herons counted as "British birds," only one, the Common Heron, nests, or ever has nested, so far as I know, in the British Isles, the rest being only included in the list on account of a few stragglers which from time to time have found their way to our shores, and eventually, almost as a matter of course, to our museums.

One of these, the Purple Heron, is common enough as a summer migrant in Holland and France, so that it is somewhat surprising that it has not been recorded as nesting in England in former years—at all events—when suitable localities were more abundant than they are now. But none of the remainder are to be found nesting nearer than the south of Europe; the Great White Heron being restricted to the eastern portion, and the Buff-backed Heron to the western, this bird being only found as a summer migrant in the south of Spain.

All of these Herons, like our well-known Common Heron, nest in colonies. These, however, instead of consisting of one species only, are composed of three or four different species nesting together in immense numbers, and with them are generally other allied forms, such as Night Herons, Ibises, etc.

The sight of one of these immense colonies—though rare—is one of the most striking and interesting spectacles possible to any ornithologist, and, once seen, one can never be forgotten.

As one rides over the marshy wilderness lying between the two great Spanish rivers, —the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir—known as the *marisma*, small parties of Buff-backed Herons are constantly to be seen in attendance on the herds of cattle and semi-wild horses which have an almost aquatic existence in this most extraordinary district. Very often the birds will perch on the backs of the animals in order to rid them of ticks and other insect pests. From this habit is derived their local name among the Spanish herdsmen—*Garapatosas*, tick-eaters. And among the reeds which encircle the *lagunas*, one may often see the head and neck of the lovely Little Egret; or perhaps a startled Purple Heron will sud-

NIGHT HERON.

denly rise with drooping legs and hurry with vigorous flaps to some safer shelter; while strings of Glossy Ibis pass homeward bound athwart the sky, looking intensely black against the evening glow.

But although these are common and

PURPLE HERON'S NEST, SPAIN.

familiar sights enough in this Paradise for marsh birds, it is only at their nesting-places that any idea can be formed of the prodigious number of birds, which assemble at some remote lagoon, far from the haunts of men, and surrounded on all sides by miles of shifting sand-dunes, pine-forests, and desolate swamps.

My first sight of such a colony was on the 1st of May, 1897, accompanied by two mounted Spanish *guardas*, another one being astride of a pack-mule laden with cameras and other photographic impedimenta, wading-trousers, etc., and food and wine for the day. Our last halt had been at a colony of Spoonbills and Purple Herons, and as we rode down the sand-hills towards a small *laguna*, surrounded with reeds, and almost grown over with tamarisks, which lay below us, a dense cloud of snow-white forms rose *en masse* from the bushes and circled around, some perching again, but the bulk of them settling on the sand a little distance away; while at every step fresh birds would rise and mingle with those already on the wing, until the air was full of drifting and flapping masses of birds.

To dismount and unpack the camera took but a few minutes, and I was soon hard at work waist-deep in water, attempting to obtain photographs of the groups of birds as they clustered on the bending tamarisks. By moving slowly and cautiously, with the tripod submerged very nearly up to the baseboard of the camera, in and out of the clumps of bushes, I was able to approach quite near to the birds, and after a while many perched only a yard or two away from me. In fact, this was one of the very few

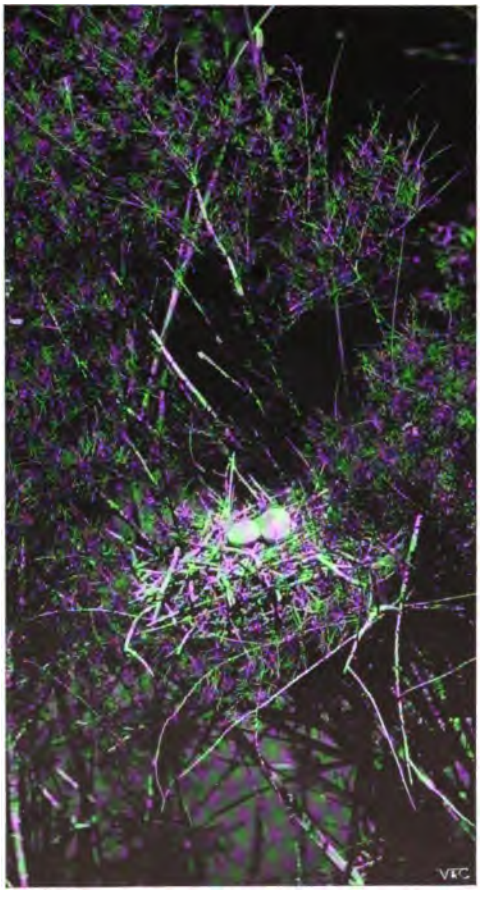
NIGHT HERON'S NEST, SPAIN.

occasions when a hand camera might have been an effective instrument for bird photography. The scene was one of the most extraordinary excitement and bustle. The bushes, which grew to the height of five or six feet above the level of the water, were full of their nests, none of which, however, at

Photo by] [J. Bushby.

"THE SENTINEL."

this date contained eggs, while the topmost twigs were crowded with grotesque groups of long-legged birds clinging in every conceivable attitude with their long toes to the slender branches, which not only bent and swayed with their weight, but were blown backwards and forwards by a boisterous wind. An unoccupied twig would be appropriated as a perch by some incoming bird; but before he could settle down, and while still flapping with extended wings to preserve his balance, another one would fly up and knock him off and take possession, only to be ousted himself the next moment by a fresh arrival. And so they would go on struggling, fighting, and flapping, and



SQUACCO HÉRON'S NEST.

making a most uncanny babel of uncouth cries, croaks, and grunts.

The two species by far the most numerous were the Buff-backed Herons (*A. bubulcus*) and Little Egrets (*A. garzetta*), which must have been present in thousands; then came the Glossy Ibis (*Plegardis fulcinella*) and Night Herons (*Nycticorax griseus*), and with them a very few Squacco Herons (*A. ralloides*).

The photographic work on this first day

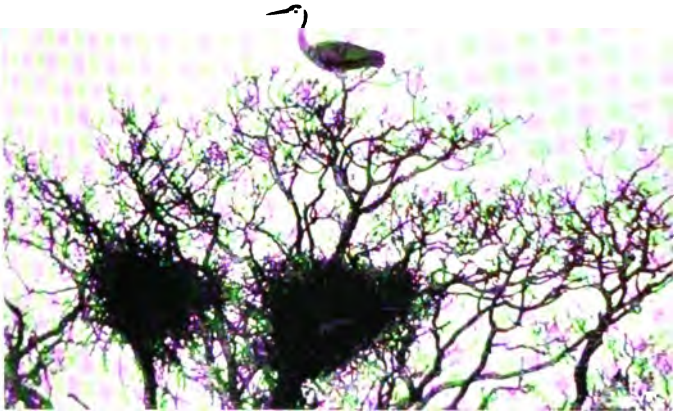
COMMON HERON ON NEST, WANSTEAD PARK.

came to a most untimely end; for, leaving the camera in the water whilst wading ashore for a fresh stock of plates, the high wind capsized it into four feet of water, and in groping about for it I submerged the top of my wading-trousers, and most unfortunately a bagful of dark slides also became immersed, so that not only had I to ride home in a complete state of saturation, which, after all, was nothing very unusual, but the day's work was utterly spoilt, about thirty plates being quite ruined by the wetting.

However, two more visits, on the 5th and 8th of May, enabled me to obtain many interesting photographs of these birds and also of their nests and eggs. On the 5th were many eggs of the Buff-backed Herons and Little Egrets, one nest of the former containing five eggs; and on the 8th we found eggs of the Glossy Ibis, Night Herons, and Squacco Herons.

Though the eggs of all these birds are

somewhat similar in colour, yet there is enough difference of shade, together with shape and size, to distinguish fairly readily the eggs of each species. The Buff-backed Herons' eggs are pale blue, rounded both ends, and larger than those of the Little Egrets, which are not only generally darker, but somewhat smaller and distinctly pointed at both ends. Those of the Glossy Ibis are larger than either, pointed at one end only, and are very much the darkest in colour —a dark greenish blue. The



COMMON HERON OVER NEST, RICHMOND PARK.

It is from the dorsal plumes of the Little Egret, which are only assumed during the breeding season, that the so-called "ospreys" or "aigrettes" of the milliner are taken, to be used for the decoration of ladies' bonnets.

In consequence of the persecution to which they are subjected, owing to this demand for their nuptial plumes, these elegant and graceful birds are becoming

GLOSSY IBIS AND BUFF-BACKED HERON.

Night Herons' are pale blue, larger than the two first, and pointed at both ends; while the Squacco's are much smaller, pale, and very round.

Although we were thus fortunate in obtaining eggs at this date, it is very unusual for them to begin breeding so early; but as Mr. Abel Chapman remarks in his "Wild Spain," where he gives the end of May as the average time for eggs, the date entirely depends upon the rainfall and the consequent amount of water in the *marisma*.

GLOSSY IBIS, BUFF-BACKED HERONS, AND EGRET.

"HERONS IN FLIGHT." BY G. E. LODGE.

very scarce, and are only saved from utter annihilation by the inaccessibility of their nesting-stations. Unfortunately it seems perfectly useless to appeal to the so-called gentle sex to abandon the semi-barbaric fashion of decorating themselves with the spoils of the most beautiful of Nature's children. No matter what cruelty and suffering are involved in obtaining feathers and skins of rare, beautiful, and useful birds, wear them they will in spite of the constant appeals made from the press and the pulpit.

The male Egret in breeding plumage is a marvel of beauty. The creamy dorsal plumes hang gracefully over the ivory white plumage, others droop pendent from the front of the neck, while a long, white crest ornaments the head. The irides of the eyes are bluish white, and the eyes are surrounded by a bare patch of skin of a pale lavender colour. The beak, legs, and claws are black, the toes dull yellow.

On the foot of one shot by the *guarda-mayor* was firmly fixed a large leech.

The leeches are very numerous and troublesome in all these Spanish lagoons. The horses' legs had to be examined constantly and carefully, but my wading-trousers puzzled them as they wandered over them vainly attempting to draw blood.

The Purple Heron, which is perhaps the most common species in Spain, does not, in my experience, nest with the other species, but in smaller colonies by itself, spread over an area of reed-covered marsh, as in Holland.

The nests are formed of dead and withered reeds, and sometimes with a foundation of sticks, generally supported by bent-down reeds growing out of the water from three to five feet deep. Occasionally, however, I have seen them over firm if not dry ground, but always in most retired and secluded spots, where, amid the luxuriant forest of tall reeds, the birds can find the solitude and quietness so essential to their habits.

YOUNG PURPLE HERON IN NEST, HOLLAND.

Here the five blue eggs, lying on a rough platform of sere and yellow stalks in the midst of the sea of green and rustling reeds, make a typical picture of aquatic bird life, and one not easily to be surpassed in beauty. The very solitude and inaccessibility of the spot seems to enhance its interest and to add another charm to the scene.

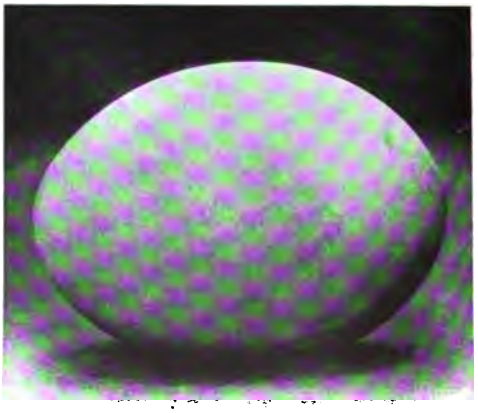
The young birds, when they begin to assume the first plumage, before leaving the

LITTLE EGRETS IN NESTING-COLONY.

nest, are very grotesque, though at the same time very striking in appearance. The eyes are pale yellow, legs green, while the plumage generally is reddish, with bright blue primary quills. The stench from the dirty nests and the numerous decaying fish lying about all around is almost overpowering.

The birds themselves are about the shyest and most wary of any with which I have ever had experience.

On one occasion I selected a nest which contained, besides three freshly hatched birds, an egg on the point of hatching, and having built up a covering of reeds, went into hiding with full expectation of success. For hours the birds flew round overhead, and every now and then I could see one, after skimming along just over the reeds, pull up, after dropping its legs, and alight on a hidden nest, but they obstinately refused to come to the one I had focused the camera for. At last a bird, whether belonging to the nest or not I know not, alighted within a few yards a little to one side of me. Here it remained for some time, but looking in my direction so suspiciously that I was unable to move. If I had not seen it alight, I am perfectly sure that I should never have detected its presence, so inconspicuous was it among the reeds; the long, slender neck resembled the stalk, while the head and beak were exact counterfeits of a long, pointed leaf swaying in the wind.



PURPLE HERON'S EGG.

In front of it, in a frantic state of vociferous excitement, was a Reed Warbler, plainly betraying by its actions that its own nest was near at hand; and, sure enough, after the Heron had departed, I found one with four eggs.

The Common Heron (*A. cinerea*) will also, in the absence of trees, make a similar nest in the reeds, just raised above the surface of the water. One such colony in Holland was not far from the Purple Herons and Spoonbills, but the water was so deep, coming nearly up to my chin, and the bottom so soft, that I momentarily expected to disappear

GLOSSY IBIS.

though Chapman mentions the bird once, he says nothing about its nesting.

Instances have been known and recorded of Herons nesting on the ground or in low bushes in the British Isles, but always in very retired and secluded spots, like the islands in the Irish loughs and in the Highlands of Scotland. It may possibly be that such lowly sites are in accordance with the original habits of the birds, and that they have only in comparatively recent years, and in populated localities, been driven for security to nest in high trees.

bodily, camera and all; and six attempts to photograph the nests, which contained young birds, were all failures.

After all, such a place seems a far more appropriate nesting-site than the top of a tall tree. A Heron perching on the topmost twigs of a big oak tree, balancing himself in a high wind, always seems a somewhat grotesque spectacle, as though the bird were out of its proper element.

I saw no Grey Herons in Spain, so am unable to describe its nesting habits in that country. It may possibly not nest there at all, for

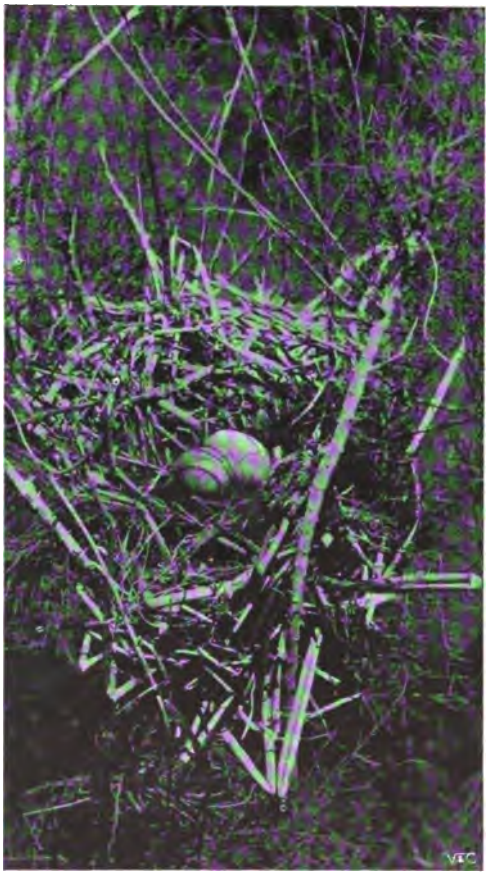
PAIR OF LITTLE EGRETS BUILDING, SPAIN.

GLOSSY IBIS AND EGRETS, SPAIN.

It is well known that birds will generally adapt themselves to altered circumstances with more or less readiness. A case in point is the Raven, which in the beginning of this century nested commonly on trees in many inland localities, even close to London; but owing to the constant persecution of game-preservers and farmers, they have throughout England abandoned this habit entirely, and have betaken themselves to the

most precipitous cliffs along the coast. In countries where game preservation is not so rigorously carried out, and where the population is scanty, as in Spain, the Raven has not found any necessity for a change in this respect, and still nests in the pine trees.

Floods, again, are powerful factors in the lives of marsh-nesting birds. An interesting letter in the *Zoologist* for October, 1896, not only records an instance of the Common Sandpipers of a district profiting by experience, and nesting on high ground some distance from the river, where they had been before accustomed to nest on the usual gravelly stretches from which their eggs had been swept away twice successively by floods,



NEST OF GLOSSY IBIS.

but it also gives a clue to the origin of the Green Sandpiper's habitual custom of nesting on trees; for one of these Sandpipers had actually "built on the head of a pollard willow, and the nest was only discovered by an angler striking the tree and flushing the bird."

It is probable that the Green Sandpipers have been peculiarly liable to be flooded out, and that those birds which were wise enough to adapt themselves to circumstances by nesting on trees have survived until the habit has become universal among the species. The Sandpipers, in common with most of the ground-building wading

LITTLE EGRET'S NEST.

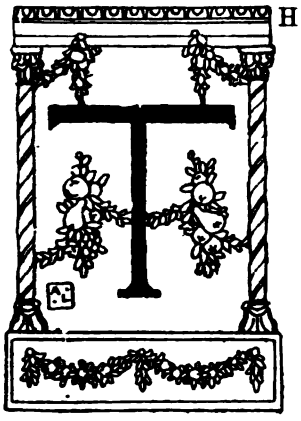
birds, are not accustomed to make much of a nest, and therefore this species has been driven to use the old nests of other birds, as it is regularly known to do in Germany.

Those who are desirous of seeing our Common Heron at its nesting quarters can do so without much difficulty, for there are heronries scattered about in most English counties, while even the Londoner need go no further than Wanstead Park and Richmond Park.

In Wanstead Park, only five miles from Whitechapel, there is a large and flourishing heronry on the island in one of the lakes, where the birds are safe and are well protected. And very interesting it is to see these long-legged wading birds flying over the trees and settling on their nests, and to listen to their curious croaks. Here there are between sixty and seventy nests. The heronry at Richmond is a much smaller one; nevertheless, it forms one of the chief objects of interest in this beautiful park.

THE OTHER MAN'S STORY.

By FRED M. WHITE.*



THERE was a sudden rush of figures, the suggestion of a badly acted quarrel, the gleam of a revolver-barrel or two, and the crowd round the roulette-table realised that a bold attempt to rob the bank was in progress. To add to the dramatic swiftness of it, someone in the conspiracy had cut off the electric light, so that the greater part of the big saloon was in darkness.

The thing had come so unexpectedly that the croupier, old and hard in the ways of the wicked, could only bend over his bank and hug the shining metal there, much as a hen squats over her chickens when a hawk is overhead. An arm shot out of the half-gloom, and the croupier, his head laid open by a heavy blow from a loaded stick, ceased to take any further interest in the proceedings, snoring like a pig. Just for a moment it looked as if the amazing audacity of the proceedings were going to be crowned with success. Two or three revolver-shots rang out in quick succession, women of all kinds clung together and screamed, a shrill whistle trilled somewhere in the distance.

All this about half past six on a rather dark February evening, the hour when the saloons of Monte Carlo are not at their fullest, and an attack like this would be most likely to succeed. The three Englishmen who had just come in looked at one another, doubtful of what to do next. They were not in the least frightened; they would have been capable of anything, had only somebody given them the lead. The lead came unexpectedly from a man who was struggling with a tangled knot of humanity on the floor.

"Hi, there, you look a likely lot," he gasped. "Trip up that chap with the red hair. Get him down and jump on him. I can manage the rest."

Two of the Englishmen moved to the attack. There were no more revolver-shots, seeing that the noise of conflict was likely to do more harm than good. The third Englishman did not move. He was slighter than his companions, and though his mouth was hard and firm almost to the verge of cruelty, he was still palpably in the grip of some lingering illness. He seemed to be fascinated, too, by a queer sight that met his gaze from the floor. Out of the tangled knot struggling there, a hand shot—a nervous, sinewy hand, with a peculiar scar in the shape of a crucifix upon it.

"Come on, Duckworth," one of the other men called. "Twist that fellow's arm behind him."

But the man called Duckworth never stirred. He was like one who sees a ghost. The sinewy hand with the scar upon it was no longer visible, for it had got back to work again; the eager watcher could not discover what body the limb in question belonged to. He was still standing in the same dazed way when the lights came up again, and the saloon filled with men in uniform. The raid was over almost as soon as it had begun, there was a buzz of excited conversation, and pale, fair cheeks began to draw blood again. The other two Englishmen were still breathless from the struggle.

"An American gang," one of them panted. "Headed by a chap who has a bad reputation on two continents. By Jove! that fellow would have made a big name as a soldier. Pretty mad thing to try, all the same. Heart worrying you again, Duckworth?"

"It wasn't quite that, Herries," Duckworth stammered. "Of course, the excitement was trying to anybody in my wretched state of health. After the adventurous life I have lived in America, a little thing like that could not hurt me. But in the middle of that struggle I had a shock that seemed to knock the breath out of my body"

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"Saw something unpleasant, eh?" the third man asked. The other two were good average Englishmen of the better type—clean-lived, well-groomed, sportsmen both. "Sight of that croupier with his head cut open?"

"Croupiers are cheap enough," Duckworth said somewhat brutally. "It wasn't that, Gilroy. A hand shot up from the floor where those fellows were struggling—a brown hand, with a scar like a crucifix upon it—*the* hand, mind you!"

"You don't say so!" Gilroy cried. "Quite sure that you are not mistaken?"

"Perfectly certain," Duckworth replied. "There was the clean mark of the crucifix, exactly as you described it that night in Rome. My dear chap, it is impossible for two men to have a mark like that on the back of a hand. You can imagine the effect that the discovery had upon me, with my nerves in their present condition. That fellow has followed me here, he has got on my track again."

"You mean to say," Herries said slowly, "that the man in question——"

"Is looking for me to murder me. Yes, I do. He tried it in Rome, as Gilroy knows. But for a bit of luck I should have been killed in my bedroom at the Maremma Hotel. It is terrible to be tracked and followed by a merciless, murderous assassin like this. If I only knew the man by sight, if he would only come out in the daylight——"

Duckworth paused and shuddered. Yet he had a justly high reputation for courage.

"Well, anyway, you've got a chance to drag the ruffian into the open now," Herries said cheerfully. "You will be able to recognise your assailant in future. All you and Gilroy have to do is to go before the local police and swear an information——"

"But I tell you I am as much in the dark as ever," Duckworth protested. "Let us go over to Nice and dine at the Gordon Hotel—my nerves call for a private room. I saw the hand and the scar plainly enough, but in the struggle and the semi-darkness it was impossible to identify the particular body to which the hand belonged. All I know is that my enemy followed me here, and that I have had a fortunate warning of the fact."

The speaker looked like a man who has the fear of the rope about his neck. Herries was inclined to make light of the matter. All they had to do was to keep their eyes open for a man with a peculiar scar on the back of his right hand. Once they found him, it would be a very easy matter to hand him over to the authorities. Perhaps he was already in custody, perchance he was one of the gang of captured desperadoes.

"I don't think so," said Duckworth thoughtfully. "The scarred right hand seemed to be on the side of authority; anyway, he had a pretty good grip on the red-haired chap. But for the life of me I could make nothing of his face, or even the colour of his clothes."

"Bet you a fiver I find the chap before twenty-four hours have passed," Herries boasted. "If we buck up, we shall just catch the 7.5 train to Nice, where we will dine at the Gordon Hotel. And we'll humour old Duckworth with a private room."

The colour was creeping into Duckworth's pale cheeks again, his mouth had recovered its hard lines. Herries and Gilroy were old school and college chums, their "people" were intimate, but of Duckworth neither of them knew much. He alluded to no past, beyond the time when he had gone to California, where he had made a fortune in the goldfields, and where he had met with many strange adventures. But his form was correct, he was well dressed, he gave very good dinners at a small house of his own in Hill Street, he always contrived to get the cream of the Scotch moors and the Norfolk partridge-shooting. A man like that forms a very desirable acquaintance in these days of semi-illiterate financiers and foreign magnates of doubtful origin. In their frank, short-sighted way, both Herries and Gilroy summed Duckworth up as a "good sort; just a little close, you know, but a dashed good sort, take him all round." It was the philosophy of the club and the smoking-room, so that Duckworth's position was assured.

He did not look particularly assured as he adjusted his dress-tie in front of the glass in his bedroom before joining the others at the Gordon Hotel. True, he was just getting the better of a most malignant attack of rheumatic fever, which had left his heart in a sad state, but that did not altogether account for his slackness to-night. His mind went back to that night in Rome, a little more than a year ago, when Gilroy had saved his life from the man with the scarred hand, the same man who was after him now. It came back to him that he had never quite satisfactorily explained to Gilroy why that mysterious and murderous attack had been made. He had said something about a revengeful madman who had some fancied grievance in connection

"Out of the tangled knot struggling there, a hand shot."

with gold-mining and a disputed "claim," a man whose face he had never seen, and Gilroy was pleased to accept the explanation. Gilroy was a gentleman as well as a man of the world, and he had expressed no vulgar curiosity—there were doubled-down pages in the life of everybody, as he knew perfectly well.

The other two were waiting in the lounge of the hotel for Duckworth. Though the house was crowded, they had managed to get a private room, where dinner would be served in a few minutes—a room on the first floor, with a balcony looking out towards the sea. The crowd in the lounge was getting on Duckworth's frayed nerves.

"Let's go up to the room and sit in the balcony," he suggested. "We shall have just time to get through a cigarette there before dinner."

It was cool and fresh on the balcony, and the silence of it was soothing. Presently, from the dining-room came a clear, sharp voice demanding to know things, the apologetic whine of a waiter, and a peremptory order for somebody to go and fetch the manager.

"Some Johnnie trying to commandeer our room?" Herries suggested. "Come on, you chaps. I dare say it's one of those all-devouring Yankees."

A tall man with a beard stood before the fire, addressing the manager. He was perfectly dressed, and his manner seemed to be good. That he was annoyed about something was apparent from the expression of his face.

"If it is a mistake, then it is yours," he said. "I ordered this room this morning—I even arranged for those very flowers. It was settled with the head waiter. As I am a stranger here, I paid for the dinner in advance. The fact that my three friends have been detained in Paris makes no difference. This room is mine."

"But, m'sieur," the hotel proprietor protested, "as you are quite alone, and your friends are not arrived, and as the other gentlemen have ordered dinner here——"

"I am afraid we are out of court, sir," Herries said pleasantly. "We came from the balcony to dispossess you by force of arms, if necessary. But after what you say, we can only bow to the inevitable and resign ourselves to the *table d'hôte*."

"Which is half over by this time, sir," the stranger said. "Moreover, the *table d'hôte* dinner here is frequently open to criticism. Are there three of you?"

"There are three of us exactly," Herries said. "Let me introduce myself by name. This is my friend, Mr. Gilroy. Here also is my friend, Mr. Duckworth, who is an invalid. It was to please him that we engaged this room. But after your recent remarks to the landlord, I am afraid that we must retire gracefully."

The stranger smiled and shook his head.

"My name is Harrington," he said—"a cosmopolitan at that. Let me make a suggestion to you. Why not dine here with me? I have ordered a special dinner for four, but my friends have been detained in Paris. You look like getting no dinner at all. Is the suggestion that you should be my guests too inconvenient to you?"

"It's deuced kind of you," Gilroy said warmly. It seemed to him that the metal rang true. "I am sure that my friend Duckworth will make no objection."

"Your friend Duckworth will be confoundedly glad of the opportunity," the latter said. "The suggestion was very kind and thoughtful of you, sir. It's a very odd thing, but I seem to have heard your voice before."

"Same idea occurred to me," Herries remarked. "By Jove, I've got it! Weren't you in the Casino to-night when the row was going on?"

"And didn't you ask us to lay hold of that red-headed chap?" Gilroy cried.

"You have guessed it," Harrington smiled. "Directly the dispute began, I tumbled to what was going to happen. When the first shot was fired, I felt certain of it. And I had some little grasp of the kind of reputation that that red-headed man enjoys. So I just dropped to the floor and clipped as many of the gang by the legs as possible. They were all on the top of me, and it was only now and then that I got a glimpse of anybody. Then I spotted you two gentlemen as being likely fellows in a fight, and I called to you."

"Where did you get to afterwards?" Gilroy asked.

"Oh, I was dragged off with the rest. The fools of police took me for one of the gang, and they were all for clapping me in durance vile, but for the intercession of a French officer who happened to know me pretty well. Audacious thing, wasn't it?"

The rest admitted that it was, and at the same moment the waiter came in with the dinner. The respect entertained for him by Harrington's guests was deepened as the meal proceeded. It had been chosen with care and taste and a nice discrimination.

which same remark applied to the wines. The Englishmen felt that their lines had fallen on pleasant places. They sat round the table toying with their liqueurs and cigarettes, quiet and restful now and at peace with all the world. A little colour had crept into Duckworth's pale face, he seemed to have forgotten his fears. Harrington looked at him from time to time with a sympathetic interest.

"You have had a very bad turn, Mr. Duckworth?" he asked.

"Well, yes," Duckworth replied. "I caught rheumatic fever out duck-shooting before Christmas. I had a fearful time of it—in fact, it was touch and go with me. The worse of it is that the malady has affected my heart so dreadfully. I'm a bundle of nerves at present. It seems odd to be like this; because up till lately, when I heard nerves mentioned, I regarded the word as a mere abstract quality. For a man like myself, who has roughed it for years in California, the idea of being a broken-down invalid is terrible."

Harrington's dark face showed distinct traces of interest.

"So you know California?" he said. "I also know the States very well—in fact, I made most of my modest little fortune there. What part?"

"Up along the ridges by Sierra Gradanna principally. Know the region?"

"As well as I know myself," said Harrington. "I nearly lost my life there on one occasion. But we won't talk of hairbreadth escapes to-night, as you look so white and tired. I'm afraid that the shindy in the Casino was too much for you."

Duckworth hesitated as if about to say something.

"It was a shock," he said after a pause; "not exactly the row, but something that happened then. I am to a certain extent a creature of circumstances. It was my fate some years ago to incur the hatred of a lunatic whose name I don't even know; indeed, I should not recognise the man even if he stood before me at the present moment. That fellow followed me to Europe with the full and deliberate intention of taking my life; indeed, he would have succeeded once a while ago, had it not been for my friend Gilroy here. I saw that man in the Casino to-night."

"Indeed," Harrington replied. "This is deeply interesting. But there is one point that I do not quite follow. You say you would not recognise your mysterious antagonist if you met him in the flesh, and yet you say that you saw him to-night."

"Certainly I do. He was on the floor in the *mêlée*. I did not see his face; I could not for the life of me tell you what he was wearing. But I recognised him by a peculiarity that would render him conspicuous anywhere. On the back of his hand was a scar in the shape of a crucifix. That is also the mark of the beast on the right hand of the man who has come all these miles to take my life."

A short, queer laugh broke from the lips of Harrington. His dark face changed, then altered again to its normal expression in a dazzling flash. He very quietly apologised for his mirth.

"Pardon me," he said; "I had forgotten how serious—— But the strange coincidence! However, we will come to that presently. If Mr. Duckworth——"

"Do you happen to know anything of the man with the crucifix scar?" Gilroy asked at length.

Harrington leant back in his chair and coolly surveyed the company from behind his cigar.

"Yes," he said very slowly and distinctly, "I know the man with the scar very well indeed."

II.

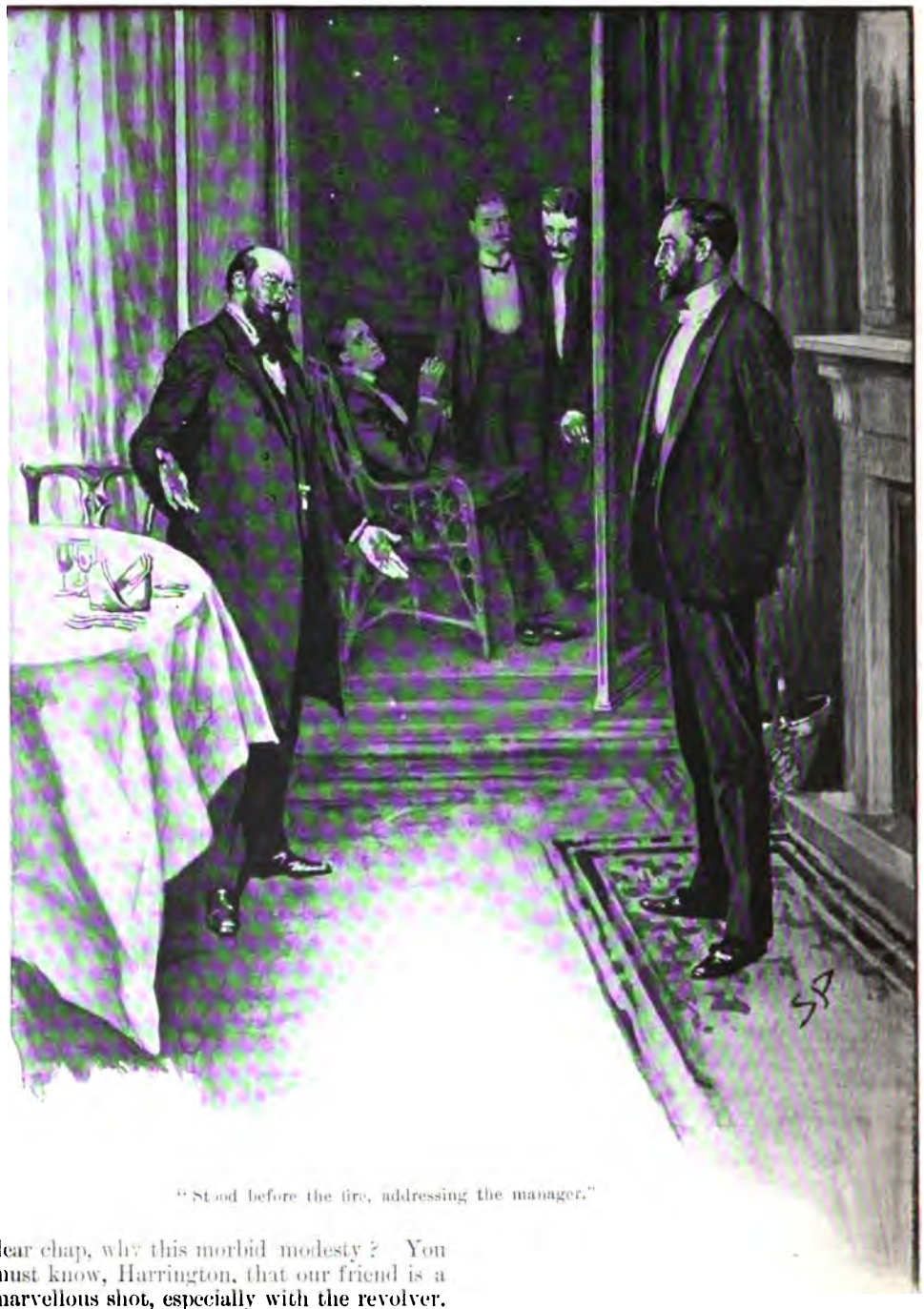
THE muscles of Duckworth's thin mouth quivered. He breathed hard, as if he had recently been undergoing some trying physical exertion. The others were deeply interested, but they showed no emotion of any kind—it was to them like the unfolding of the last act of some fascinating play. The stranger was absolutely quiet, too, though a close observer would have noticed the whiteness of his knuckles as his clenched right hand lay on the table. The tendons of the wrist were rigid.

"It is very fortunate that we have met, sir," Duckworth said.

"So it would seem," Harrington replied. "But before I tell my story I should like to hear yours. That comes first in proper sequence, I think. I should like to know whence you derived your information about the star-shaped scar, seeing that you have never been face to face with the owner of it. Are you a good shot?"

The question sounded natural enough, but Duckworth backed from it as if it annoyed him. He was understood to say that he knew something of the use of the gun.

"Oh, that won't do," Herries cried. "My



"Stood before the fire, addressing the manager."

dear chap, why this morbid modesty? You must know, Harrington, that our friend is a marvellous shot, especially with the revolver. Have seen him mark the nine pips on a white card at fifteen paces."

"What has my shooting to do with it?" Duckworth asked with some irritation.

"It may come in later on," Harrington said quietly. "But first let me know how the secret assassin is identified with the star-shaped crucifix."

"That is where I come in," Gilroy proceeded to explain. "The thing happened in Rome two years ago. It was soon after I had met Duckworth, and we were travelling

together at the end of the summer. Duckworth—if he will excuse me saying so—is rather a reticent kind of chap, and not given to confidences. All the same, he hinted to me that he had a something that he was afraid of. I put it down to nerves, and thought no more about the matter for the time. We were staying at the Maremma Hotel, a house which is only on two storeys, as you know, and which has a garden on two sides of it.

"Duckworth had gone to bed fairly early one evening, for we had had a tiring day, and I was preparing to do the same thing in my room, when I heard a scuffle and the noise of blows. Then somebody called for help, and I heard a revolver shot. I don't know why, but the memory of what Duckworth had told me flashed into my mind, and I rushed into his room. It was pitch dark, for the electric lights were out, but I could hear the struggle going on by the bedside. I called out, and a tall figure made for the window. He was outside before I could lay my fingers on the electric light switch, and all that I could see, looking towards the window, was a hand on the ledge. I suppose the fellow was holding on with one hand to steady himself for the drop into the garden below. I could just see that hand for an instant, and no more. On the back of it was a scar in the shape of a crucifix.

Harrington nodded thoughtfully. He appeared to be deeply engrossed in the story, though he did not look once in the direction of Duckworth. He helped himself to a fresh cigarette and poured a little more claret into his glass.

"All this is exceedingly interesting," he said. "The dramatic part appeals to me. Mr. Duckworth has a deadly enemy whom he cannot identify save for the peculiar scar. The man with the scar is the sword of Damocles hanging over his head. The knowledge of that near presence gets astride his nerves. Is not that so?"

"I'll not deny it," Duckworth said gloomily; "especially in my present state of health."

"Let us get on a bit further," Harrington proceeded. "Did you bring the matter before the authorities?"

"No, I didn't; had no desire for any unnecessary fuss. I don't mind saying that I took a great many precautions to throw my would-be assassin off the track——"

"With the result that there has been no further attempt on your life? You have seen and heard no more of the man with the scar from that day to this?"

"Not till I saw that queer, maimed hand in the Casino to-night. You may argue that this is no more than a strange coincidence, but I know better. That fellow has got on my track again; he has followed me here. There could not be two men with scars like that. But seeing that you know the fellow perfectly well——"

"Stop a minute," Harrington interrupted. "Don't let's go too fast. In the first place, tell me what is the real or fancied grievance that the man with the scar has against you. Didn't you say it had something to do with gold-mining."

Duckworth nodded curtly. Evidently he had no disposition to be communicative. He shuffled about in his chair; he seemed to be uneasy under the gaze of Harrington, which was turned full upon him now for the first time.

"Come," the latter urged. "It is only fair to yourself that you should make your case good. When you have spoken, then I will present the case from the point of view of the man with the scar. And if your story rings true, I will promise you one thing—you will never have cause to fear the man with the scar again."

"You will tell us all about him?" Gilroy asked eagerly.

"Certainly I will," Harrington proceeded, "when Mr. Duckworth has spoken."

"But I assure you there is little or nothing to tell," Duckworth exclaimed. "It was merely a case of diamond cut diamond up in the Sierras yonder. We were not mining in the strict sense of the word; we were placer-hunting—that is, looking for pockets of gold washed down by the water from the snows, or placed there ages ago in the Glacial period. As you know, they were a pretty rough lot in those old days."

"I know that by painful, personal experience," Harrington said gravely.

"Well, I had to take care of myself. I had located a likely spot on the spur of one of the mountains, and I had pegged out my claim. I couldn't work it for a couple of days, for the simple reason that I was down with a touch of fever. When I went back in due course, I found that somebody had taken my place. I found the fellow and ventured to expostulate with him. He threatened me with what would happen when his partner returned. You know how one word leads to another in that quarter, and it soon came to the drawing of weapons. I was quicker on the trigger, and my man went down with a bullet through the lungs.

We were fighting on the edge of a narrow plateau, with the valley two thousand feet below us, and he went headlong back over the edge and was seen no more. Nobody could ever have found that body. It would lie there for ever under the snows. But I tell you it was a fair fight."

Duckworth uttered the last words with a snarling challenge in them. His face was deadly pale, and little beads of moisture stood out on his forehead. Nobody spoke, the interest was too great for mere trivial interruption. It was only Harrington who asked a question at length.

"Did the partner intervene?" he suggested.

"Not in a manly, straightforward kind of way, curse him!" Duckworth said. "I tell you the claim was mine, and not a soul in the world could fairly dispute it. I was myself in those days, and feared neither man nor devil. I worked that placer pocket single-handed for a week, and I took out of it over two hundred thousand pounds' worth of gold-dust. So far as I was concerned, I had finished mining. When I had done, the partner came back just too late to meet me, for I had started for San Francisco. This partner was the man with the scar on his hand, though I had never seen him and never heard his name. But another successful man who got to 'Frisco a day or two afterwards brought tidings of the fact that a mysterious ruffian had sworn a bitter oath against me, and that he was going to follow me to the end of the earth. As the fellow did not know me by sight, and had never heard even my people's name, I did not give myself any great thought over the matter until that night in Rome. And if there was anybody who can say that I have not told my story honourably, I should like to meet him face to face. I think that is about all."

"It is certainly your turn now, Harrington," Herries suggested.

"Yes, I fancy it is my turn," Harrington said slowly and distinctly, "especially as I told you that I know the man with the scar on his hand quite well."

"He must be an abandoned scoundrel, a poisonous ruffian!" Gilroy said hotly.

"Well, it sounds odd, but I cannot quite agree with you," Harrington proceeded in the same smooth and even manner. "Let me present the story from the point of view of the other man. When you have weighed the two narratives up, you shall judge between them. And when you have done so, I will undertake to produce the man with the scar on the right hand."

The little audience thrilled; even the two healthy, clean-lived Englishmen were conscious of the fact that their pulses were beating a little faster than usual.

"We will call the man with the scar Clarkson if you like," Harrington proceeded. "He had left the good old country, meaning England, ten years ago, to seek his fortune. No need to speak of his ups and downs, of which he had many. He was a man of few friends; he had left nothing behind him in England but one little girl, of whom he was exceedingly fond. This little girl was delicate and needed more than the man could send her. He worked very hard for her, he led a clean life for her sake. And after many adventures he reached California, and there, together with a partner called Challis, he struck a rich placer of gold. It was an opportune find, for the little girl was ordered to the South of France, and but for the gold she must perforce have remained in England and died. She did die, as a matter of fact, because at the last moment the gold was not forthcoming, and I will tell you why.

"The placer was difficult to work, because it lay on the sheer side of the mountain—it had only been located at all by means of rope. But then it was enough to make the fortunes of more people than one. They decided to rig up a kind of crow's-nest, and procured the necessary timber and ropes. They got the thing going at last, they worked the whole of one day, perhaps the happiest day those two passed in their lives. They were just going to knock off work for the day when they heard a shot at the head of the spur. It was quickly followed by another, there was a sudden jar on the rope, and then they were going headlong into the valley, and both of them fell two thousand feet below. The rope had broken.

"After the first second or two, memory deserted the sole survivor. He recollected nothing more till he woke two or three days later in a shepherd's hut, more dead than alive. He had been lucky enough to be thrown off a cushion of snow into a great bed of dry litter in an old stream, and by a most amazing miracle he escaped altogether. Of his partner the man heard nothing more, he was for ever buried in the snows of the hillside.

"There is no reason to dwell at length on that. As soon as Clarkson could get about again, he tried the hillside once more with some new tackle; at any rate, the gold was still there, and there was no reason why he

"He pressed his hand to his heart."

should not procure it. But the gold was no longer there—somebody had come along and removed the lot of it. It was a startling discovery, for the secret had been well kept, and it struck Clarkson all of a heap at the time. He began to make inquiries quietly; but nothing came of it until the second day, Clarkson got a pointer or two from a man called Mad Billy. Mad Billy had met with an accident in a mine, which had turned his brain. He did odd jobs about the place, and as to the rest, he spent his time gloating over imaginary finds. And Billy had a story to tell."

Harrington paused and lighted a fresh cigarette. He glanced round the table to see that the audience were following the story. There was no need to do anything of the kind. The two Englishmen were looking at the speaker with parted lips, Duckworth's face was pinched and blue.

"Gentlemen, the thing was no accident at all. According to Clarkson, another man had got on the track of the secret. He had watched the rigging up of the crow's-nest, and in his secretive, furtive way Billy had watched *him*. He had seen the other man spying, and his movements had excited the

suspicions of poor Mad Billy. The plan of the stranger was simple in the extreme. He dared not show himself against the edge of the cliff with the snow for a background, because there were other men mining there, and there—he had a better notion than that altogether. He was a fine shot, as fine a shot as our friend Mr. Duckworth here."

Duckworth started slightly and coughed. He seemed to have trouble with his breathing.

"The sound of a revolver would arouse no suspicions there. So the revolver was fired twice from the cover of some shrubs—Mad Billy looking on all the time—fired full at the rope that held the cage where Clarkson and his partner were working. The shots were true and straight so that they cut the rope as clean as a knife. It was a pretty scheme, because, as the rope was shot in two, there would be no suspicions of foul play; the thing looked just as if there had been a flaw in the new rope; and, indeed, I could not tell the difference when the rope was shown to me."

There was a long pause before anybody spoke. All of them seemed to feel that Harrington was coming to the crux of his story.

"You see, this was no madman's chimera," he went on again. "Billy's tale was well backed up. But the gold was gone, and the man had gone also, and the child died, and Clarkson swore a great oath of revenge. A little time after that, Clarkson had the luck that he no longer wanted, so he left California, taking Billy with him. Billy was the only one who could identify the ruffian who had done that thing. For a year or more they hunted Europe in an aimless kind of way. It is rather strange that I should stumble by accident upon the man that Clarkson was seeking."

"But I don't see," Herries cried, "that you have done anything of the kind. So far as I can see——"

"Pardon me," Harrington said, "but your friend Mr. Gilroy gave me the clue by telling me all about that business in Rome. The man with the scar on his hand was Clarkson. Clarkson shall tell the rest of the story in person. Let me produce him."

Harrington's voice had suddenly grown hard and cold. He stretched out his right hand and laid it with force on the limp right hand of Duckworth, who started at the touch.

"Take my serviette," said Harrington in the same cutting voice, "and dip it in the finger-glass. Now rub it across the back of my hand hard—*hard!*"

In a dazed kind of way Herries did as he was desired. Then a quick, gasping cry arose from all round the table, as a brown stain of paint peeled off Harrington's hand, and the red edges of a scar like a crucifix rose in the place. Duckworth's mouth was trembling: he looked into the face of the man holding him with fearful eyes.

"Behold the man!" Harrington said. "I am Clarkson. It was in Rome that I ran my quarry down, at the Maremma Hotel. Billy spotted him as he entered his bedroom one night. All he would say was that the object of my search was in his bedroom. I asked no questions, I aroused no suspicions, I took Billy's word for it. I had made up my mind that the man should die. His life belonged to me, I was going to take it. Mr. Gilroy knows how I was prevented; the rascal whose hand I hold knows how he baffled me subsequently. And when Billy died six months ago, I decided to abandon my search altogether—it seemed as if Fate had deserted me. But the accident of circumstances is on my side at last; by sheer good luck I have found my man. Had Mr. Gilroy said nothing about that affair at Rome, I should have parted from you all on good terms. Heavens! I might even have become a friend of this fellow!"

Duckworth attempted to say something, but the words clung to his twitching lips.

"What he tells you is a lie," Harrington said. "What I say is no more than the truth. Let him stand up and deny it if he can. Let him try to refute me. One thing is certain, he does not escape me again. Stand up!"

The command was harsh and stern. Mechanically Duckworth obeyed. He rose slowly to his feet, holding on to the table for support. There was no reason to deny the accusation, no reason why the others should not urge him to that course. His guilt was stamped on his face. He pressed his hand to his heart and suddenly sat down heavily again. He had fallen forward with a crash against the glasses there, then lay quite still.

"You are wrong, sir," Gilroy said in a hoarse whisper. "He has escaped you. He is dead."

Duckworth lay there, dead, truly enough. And outside, the stars shone, there was light laughter on the air, and the soft sound of music in the distance.

SOON EXPLAINED.

LOQUACIOUS YANKEE (who has been boasting of the superior capacity of the American to the British business man, and has quoted a string of names to support his contention): Guess you haven't men of this sort in this old country.

MILD OLD GENTLEMAN (quietly): Oh, yes, we have!

LOQUACIOUS YANKEE: Say, where on earth do you keep them?

MILD OLD GENTLEMAN: In gaol.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

MRS. BROWN: I have such a lovely Christmas present for my husband!

MRS. SMITH: What is it?

MRS. BROWN: A pair of slippers. Won't he be pleased?

MRS. SMITH: Yes. What do you expect to get from him?

MRS. BROWN: Oh, nothing much—a diamond ring, I suppose, or perhaps a sealskin sacque.

HOTEL CLERK (to new boy): Did you wake up No. 44?

BOY: No, sir; couldn't wake him up, sir; but I did the nearest I could, sir.

HOTEL CLERK: What was that?

BOY: I woke up No. 45, sir.

"WHAT brought about this serious trouble between Miggs and his sweetheart?"

"Nothing. It was only that he thought a quarrel was cheaper than Christmas presents."

AN eminent French literary man, inordinately proud of his really excellent English, visiting one of our present Cabinet ministers, had spent a delightful afternoon viewing the picture galleries and art treasures of his host. In expressing the pleasure he felt, he observed that "charming though the experience was, he must not venture to *cock*croach longer on such valuable time." "You speak English so beautifully, monsieur," replied his host, "that I think you may like me to tell you that we do not say 'to *cock*croach,' but 'to *en*croach.'"

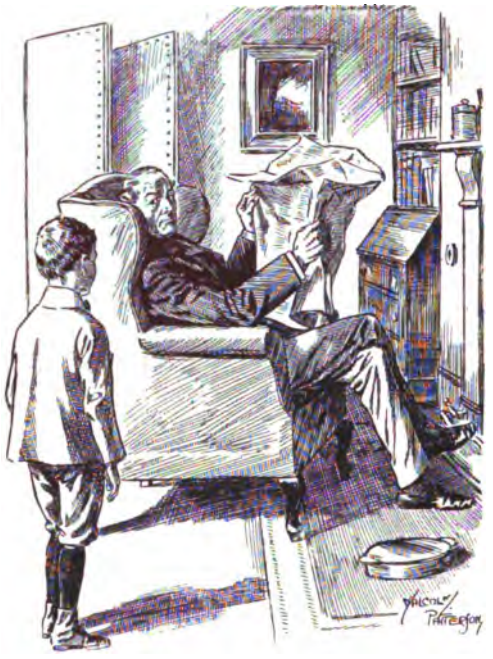
"'*Hen*-croach,' of course, of course. Hen-croach; oh! your genders, how they do puzzle me!"

LADY (hanging out of railway carriage window): Ah, I suppose you get the benefit of one of those cakes yourself sometimes?

BOY (purveyor of cakes and sandwiches): What do you mean, mum?

LADY: You eat a cake now and then?

BOY: Eat them! Oh, no, mum—I daren't do more than lick 'em. It wouldn't be business, mum!



"A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE."

"Now, Franklin, my son, you remember the lesson of yesterday's lecture? I have at last made the great fact of the evolution of species clear to you, have I not?"

"Oh, yes, papa; I understand. Before I was born, you and mamma were monkeys."

"MAMMA, is there any pie left in the pantry?"
"There is one piece, but you can't have it."
"You are mistaken, mamma—I've had it."

SOME TAME ANIMALS I HAVE KNOWN.

A thick-fleeced lamb came trotting by:
"Pray, whither now, my lamb?" quoth I.
"To have," said he, with ne'er a stop,
"My wool clipped at the baa-baa shop."

I asked the dog: "Why all this din?"
Said he: "I'm fashioned outside in,
And all my days and nights I've tried
My best to get the bark outside."

A hen was cackling loud and long.
Said I to her: "How strange your song!"
Said she: "'Tis scarce a song; in fact,
It's just a lay, to be eggs-act."

I asked the cat: "Pray tell me why
You love to sing?" She blinked her eye.
"My purr-puss, sir, as you can see,
Is to a-mews myself," said she.

A horse was being lashed one day.
Said I: "Why don't you run away?"
"Neigh, neigh! my stable mind," said he,
"Still keeps its equine-imity."

I asked the cow: "Why don't you kick
The man who whips you with the stick?"
"Alas! I must be lashed," said she,
"That I may give whipped cream, you see!"

NIXON WATERMAN.

OLD CUSTOMER: Ah! trade has altered very much—very much indeed since I was a boy.

TRADESMAN: Indeed, sir—in what way?

OLD CUSTOMER: Why, in those days we used to buy stuff that we knew under names that we didn't know; while now we know the names all right, but I'm bothered if we know what the stuff is.

MOTHER (taking her daughter round a family picture gallery): That is one of your forefathers, Elsie.

ELSIE: If that is my forefathers, is daddy my fifth one?

SHE: That man's profits from his orchestra must be very large.

HE: Well, he earns every penny of it—he has to listen to it, you know!

SOME EXCUSE.

TOWNBRED (at the end of a very bad day): Very funny thing, don't-cher-know, but I've had no better luck to-day than yesterday!

DAUGHTER OF THE HOUSE: Oh, but you haven't given the birds *very* much time to grow bigger!

NOTHING IF NOT ACCURATE.

MOTHER: If you and I were both very hungry, and I bought two apples, I'd keep the smaller for myself, Tommy.
TOMMY: Well, I gived you the small one, didn't I?

"WOMEN have very poor memories."

"Nonsense! You step on a woman's train at a ball and see how long she will remember it."

MISTRESS: Poor darling little pussy! I'm afraid she will never recover. Do you know, Bridget, I think the kindest thing would be to have her shot, and put her out of her misery.

BRIDGET: 'Deed, ma'am, I wouldn't do that. Sure, she *might* get better, after all, an' then ye'd be sorry ye'd had her killed.

THE GOVERNOR: My boy, if I hadn't toiled and slaved, you could never carry on in this way. Why don't you attend to business?

THE WAYWARD: Why? So that your grandson can't carry on!

STRANGER: Does Mr. Moss live in this street?

NATIVE: Yes!

STRANGER: Well, in which house?

NATIVE: I can't tell you exactly from here, but it's either in the first or second house that you can't see.

DR. THIRDLY: Can you tell me why your father has stopped coming to church?

MISS JONES: He found that a nap in the middle of the day kept him awake at night.

HUSBAND: These biscuits are somewhat heavy, my dear; don't you think so?

WIFE: That's funny. The cook-book says that they should be light.

"POOR old Hoppson was buried yesterday."

"Why, is he really dead?"

"The paper doesn't actually say whether he is dead or not—it simply states that he was buried."

"CAN you change a sovereign?" asked Cadley.

"Certainly," returned the druggist courteously. "How'll you have it—in quinine pills or cough drops?"

"WHAT'S the price of cheese?"

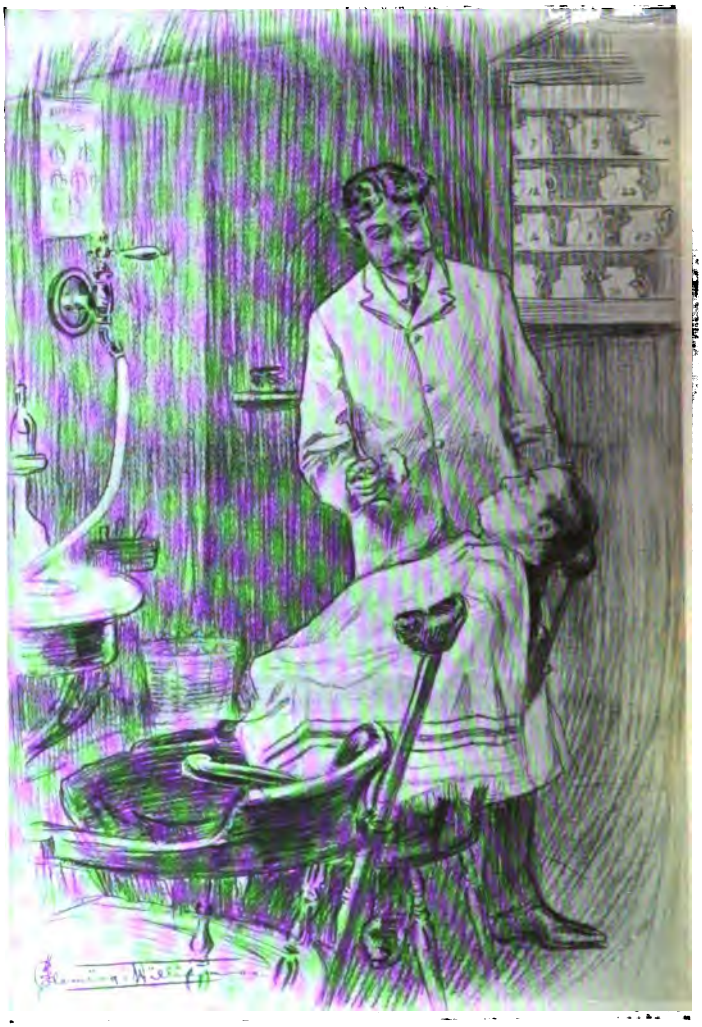
"Tenpence a pound."

"But the fellow opposite sells it for eightpence."

"Then go and buy it there."

"But he hasn't got any."

"Well, then, the kind of cheese I haven't got you can have here at eightpence a pound also."



THE CHIEF CRITICISM.

CARELESS BARBER: I'm using a new soap to-day, sir; how do you like it?
CUSTOMER: It doesn't *taste* quite so nice as the other.

LADY: You look like a hard drinker.

TRAMP: Oh, no, ma'am; that's the easiest thing I do.

"WHY do the bands always play 'St. Patrick's Day in the Morning' when the Irish have a blow-out?"

"Probably because they are not able to play it at night."

"I HAVE not spoken to my wife for three weeks."

"What are you sulking about?"

"Sulking! My dear fellow, I'm waiting till she stops talking."

"YOU hold my future happiness," he whispered.

"Well," she answered pleasantly, "I'll let it go"

CANDID ONE: Bronson has a very small sense of humour.

AMATEUR HUMORIST: I can't quite agree with you in that; he always laughs heartily at my jokes.

CANDID ONE: Ye-es!

"WAS that mind-reader able to read your thoughts?"

"No. I fooled him by thinking in French, and my French is perfectly awful, you know."

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

THE SEQUEL TO "SHE,"

P415.6

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

THE

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"IF YOUTH BUT KNEW."

WINDSOR MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1905

LONDON

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VOL 21

No. 121.

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The Windsor Magazine.

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THE

KEELEY TREATMENT

For the Cure of Alcohol and Drug Inebriety.

THE Keeley treatment has been employed in this country for many years under the auspices of a Committee of broad-minded men of affairs, who have satisfied themselves by personal investigation, not only of the efficacy of the Cure, but of its permanency in nearly every case. This Committee is composed of the following gentlemen, the Chairman being the Rev. James Fleming, B.D., Canon of York, Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty the King; Mr. W. Hind-Smith, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations, Exeter Hall, London; Lord Braye; Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who keep in constant touch with the operations of the Keeley Institute. Here are some facts from prominent men regarding the Keeley Cure for the Drink and Drug Habit.

"It really cures. It does what it professes to do." Such is the emphatic testimony of Mr. Eardley-Wilmot, the well-known secretary of the Church of England Temperance Society, who for some years has had the Keeley method under close observation in this country. He adds: "I do not wish to use high-flown language, but really and truly I look upon the Keeley cure as a modern miracle." And then he tells how case after case that had been considered hopeless has yielded speedily to the Keeley Cure, the patients returning to their work full of vigour, and happy in the restoration of all that makes life worth living.

He has sent bad cases which his Society were unable to deal with. These cases numbered in all forty, and Mr. Eardley-Wilmot says that out of these only four have lapsed, while the remaining thirty-six recovered, and have been total abstainers ever since.

Furthermore, Mr. W. Hind-Smith, of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations, declares that in his opinion, after ten years of constant service on the investigating Committee of the Keeley Cure, it is the only effective cure for chronic alcoholism and drug addiction of which he is aware.

Why does the inebriate continue to drink? He drinks because he is a slave of alcohol. He is no more responsible for drinking—when a drunkard—than a man is for having a chill or fever when he is poisoned by malaria. The Inebriate will stop drinking for a few days, or weeks, or months, perhaps. You may say then, Why not stop continuously? But this is a law of the disease of alcoholism. A man may have an attack of ague, and may then go two days, or a week, or two or three weeks, or even a year, without a paroxysm. You may say, If a man can throw off the disease for a week, or a month, or a year, why can't he do so continuously? The reason he can't is because the nature of the disease is to cause these paroxysms periodically. If the malarial disease is cured, the paroxysms will cease for ever, and the same law is found to hold good with alcoholism.

The man so diseased will continue to drink rhythmically. His persistence in drinking is a part of, and a main part of, his disease. Can we make it clear and plain to you why a drunkard will continue to drink in spite of everybody and everything good? I think if we examine the laws of disease relating to the action of poisons, and compare them with similar laws in the physical and mental world, that we can make the question and its answer plainly understood.

It is true that his disease is caused by alcohol; but it is also true that in this disease, when once it is established, alcohol is a necessity. The Inebriate is diseased because he drank whisky with his friends, or socially, or took it as a medicine, or for any reason whatever that caused him to begin drinking; but he continues to drink because his disease DEMANDS alcohol.

Persons prevent epidemics by fighting their rhythmical returns. They combat disease by interposing remedies which break up the settled rhythms of chill and fever.

Right here is the secret of the cure of inebriety. The chronic inebriate acquires a resistance to alcohol when he has a drunken bout. His family, friends, his will, and his tissue cells resist it. All these things make such an impression on his mind that he stops drinking for a while. But these resisting forces lose their power in time, and then the clamour of tissue cells for alcohol is again predominant, and he goes off again on another spree.

From this standpoint a drunkard is made up of the rhythmical predominance of all the forces which lead him to drink, and of the forces which prevent him from drinking. If all these forces could remain equal, he would be naturally cured; but they never remain equal. The Keeley remedy breaks up this rhythm. It puts the inebriate into an entirely new sphere, externally and internally. It is very like, and just as effectual as giving a man who has the ague a quantity of quinine and a change of climate. It breaks up the regular swing of the pendulum which ticks against sobriety at one extreme and into debauchery at the other.

The principles of it are easily explained. The man or woman upon whom has fallen the disease of intemperance goes to the Keeley Institute as he or she would go to any hospital or nursing-home. They go of their own free will, or they are not admitted. If they do not wish to be cured, the administrators of the Institute will have none of them. Even when they consent to come, they are left free agents to go in and out at will, so long as they are there at stated hours of the day when the treatment is administered.

The treatment takes four weeks, and is carried out in the United Kingdom only at the Keeley Institute, 8 and 9, West Bolton Gardens, London, S.W. It consists of hypodermic injections four times a day, and Dr. Keeley's remedies, which are taken every two hours during the day.

At the beginning of the treatment the patient is provided with a liberal amount of the best whisky, if he desires it; or, if the addiction be in the category of drugs, the accustomed dose is allowed, but after two or three days the old craving for alcohol disappears for good and all; for drugs it takes longer.

About one-third of the patients are ladies, all of whom have apartments outside the Institute, of their own selection.

A discerning British public appreciates hard facts. The published Annual Reports of Canon Fleming's Committee can be had for the asking. These reports are highly interesting, containing, as they do, authentic information as to the cures effected, whether the trouble had been alcoholism, morphinism, or nervous prostration.

Some of the patients had been victims to the drink or drug habit for very many years. Cures are the rule, and, what is more, they are permanent. Among the patients are physicians, lawyers, clergymen, journalists, and men generally who do the brain work of the world.

Any inquiries should be addressed to The Secretary, 9, West Bolton Gardens, in Old Brompton Road, London, S.W., which is the only address.

This is the only Keeley Institute in the British Isles

[*Facing back of plate.*

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"POACHERS." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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THE ART OF MR. BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

BY JOHN OLDCASTLE.

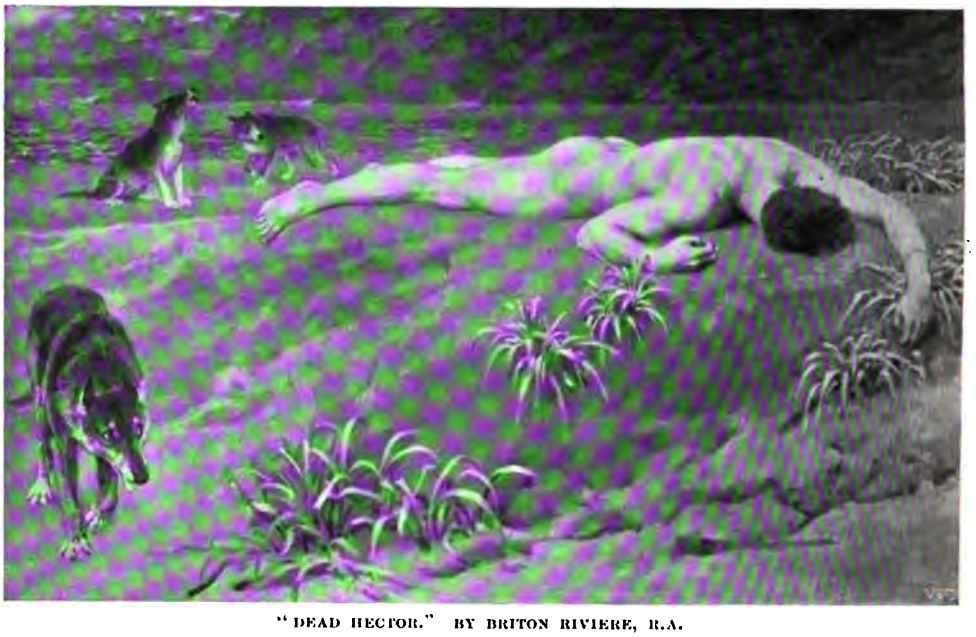
THE Rivieres have been English since 1685, and painters since 1800. Perhaps a love of appreciation came to them from their French forefathers—at any rate, they four of their generations follow each other in the works of the Royal Academy. Mr. Briton Riviere's grandfather was a medallist there, his father a student, and he himself, the Member, is the father of another medallist. His own training began, so to say, in the nursery; for he has animal studies made in the Zoo when he was seven. When he was eight he left London, his birthplace, for Cheltenham, his father having accepted the post of drawing-master in the College there. Before he was in his teens he had a brace of pictures in the British Institution—one of them, "Love at First Sight," showed a kitten and its maiden mouse. At the age of seventeen he had three canvases hung on the walls of the Royal Academy—and was not ruined.

Yet if Mr. Briton Riviere, though thus born to the purple—and other paints of his palette—were asked to declare that the infant prodigy is a figure proper to art training, he would probably demur. The mere child who worked so hard and with so much instant success does not, in fact, regard those early labours and glories as really fruitful ones. Doubtless he would be working longer hours to-day if he had not then been in hard training under his father, who, like Sir Willoughby Patterne, had a system. Luckily for the painter, who has now a great resource in reading, that system did not countenance a neglect of other than art studies; and when the family moved to Oxford, and his father opened an Art School there, Briton Riviere, when he was twenty-three, entered as an undergraduate the University which, in the years to come, was to confer on him uncovenantly its honorary D.C.L. degree.

A fit of Pre-Raphaelitism brought upon him academic frowns; for good or ill it was abandoned under later artistic influences. A little later he was to exchange the influence of Millais—in Millais' early manner—for that of Pettie and Orchardson, who became his friends. Meanwhile he did work in black-and-white for *Punch*, for *Good Words*, and for the story-books of Miss Muloch. Then it was that night work by lamplight made a levy on the artist's eyes which he has since never ceased to pay.

In 1865 "The Sleeping Deerhound" began

is a painter of four-footed domesticities. The animal being fed on denied food by a child: the live dog faithful to the dead master: the flock of geese, as influenced by a derelict hat as if they were miners in Bret Harte's story and the hat a woman's; the girl whose penal exile from the table is shared in "Sympathy" by a terrier; the repayment of that debt to girlhood by another girl's gift from her begged dole of bread to two passing dogs; the tiny puppy's "Welcome" to his brawny master returning from the pit: these and a score of other telling episodes in the relations established between man and the



"DEAD HECTOR." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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what may be called the now fixed Briton Riviere tradition. In fact, the very next picture fixed it—"The Poacher's Nurse"—the nurse in question being a dog licking the hand of his wounded master, otherwise under cover of the bedclothes. In naming this we name a multitude of followers; not merely the "Prisoners" canvas, which shows poacher and dog in durance together in a magistrate's room, but all that familiar series in which the four-footed animal appears in its relation to man. Other painters other methods. Mr. Swan, for instance, takes us into the desert: his thirsty lioness and her cubs may never have seen "the awful face of man"; his little leopards are live jewels in a glorious setting. But Mr. Briton Riviere animals he keeps—or who keep him, according to Mr. Pollock's witty inversion.

Even where Mr. Riviere encloses large game within his canvas, the motive is generally the same. He gives us the unclean herd of jackals because the human Rizpah sits there at the foot of the gibbets, and her sons' bodies hang upon them. He goes into the lion's den, but with Daniel; the wild dog licks the sores of Lazarus; the wounded lioness shows the arrow of "the mighty hunter before the Lord"; the prowling beasts of "Persepolis" are seen in an environment, if not of man, at least of vanished man's mighty, immemorial handiwork. But if Mr. Riviere does not belong to the painters who study the brute for its own sake, and away—if the contra-

"PHŒBUS APOLLO." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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dicton may pass—from the observation of man, he is free from the reproach of association with the mere painter of pampered puppy and drawing-room pet. He has seen that some of the most demonstrative expressions of animals are those called out by their association with the man for whom they were created. A dog tragically making common cause with a child in trouble may very well display more various, if not more emphatic, feeling than he shows in dealings with his own kind, and in the depicting of such phases the painter does not transgress the laws of dog life. Who will deny that the traditional horse which bears St. George to the smiting of the dragon has far less capacity for pathos than the horse in city servitude—the London omnibus-horse, to whom deliverance only too slowly comes by the dragon-like motor-car? Between the painter who sees all this with an intelligent eye, and the mere portrayer of the sentimentalities of the drawing-room hearthrug, is all the difference—a difference, this time, which *is* also a distinction. Distinguished, too, is Mr. Briton Riviere by his careful draughtsmanship, by his pretty wit, by the touch of pathos which was rarer in the studios when he began his career than it now is, or which, if it did exist, degenerated, as in the case of Landseer, into the attribution of human

"STOLEN KISSES." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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"THE EVE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW."

BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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feeling to the four-footed friend of man. Mr. Riviere interprets the dumb oracle, he does not inspire or fake it. "I paint those who cannot paint themselves," his pictures seem to say to us, and not at all in a tone of travesty.

Sometimes the painter has painted with a purpose. A quarter of a century ago, "The Poacher's Widow" was sent forth with as serious an intention as that with which Charles Kingsley wrote—

> She thought of the dark plantation,
> And the hares and her husband's blood;
> And the voice of her indignation
> Rose up to the throne of God.

The woman whose mate has come to doom through the petty theft of game in a land of waste and plethoric profusion, sits alone at nightfall on the fringes of a wood. The rabbits and pheasants crowd and sport on the soft grass, close to the woman whose head is bowed with an irremediable grief of which they are the unconscious cause.

In "Giants at Play" (no deterioration of the race here!) the painter gives us a rendering of English artisan life in one of its off moments: the makers of England play with a puppy, and combine, as often happens, though not so often as the future New Zealander looking back at the pictures of Mason and Walker may imagine—a Greek grace with the brawny

"RUS IN URBE." BY BRITON RIVIÈRE, R.A.

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strength of the Briton. A similar elegance—if the word be not too artificial—belongs to the man's figure in "The Sheep-Stealers," a picture noticeable for its rendering of misty moonlight, falling uncertainly, by a painter who never proclaimed that he could paint a landscape. It is night on bleak and solitary northern hills, and the marauder, raising his head above a loose stone boundary-wall, has just caught the attention of a flock of sheep which stand alert and face him. With energetic action he quiets the dog at his side, who waits, crouching intently, trusting nothing to sight, but all to faith in its

"THE HERD OF SWINE." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

From the picture in the Tate Gallery. Reproduced by permission of the Autotype Company, 74, New Oxford Street, owners of the copyright and publishers of the large plate.

master, hanging on its master's lip for the signal to charge. The dramatic touch of Mr. Briton Riviere is always a strong and a sane one. He knows what to show and what to hide. His concealment of the bodies of Rizpah's sons makes for the strength of his picture; and we gain, not lose, by having turned upon us in the lion's den the back of Daniel. That ruse, so to say, of composition—departed from in the companion picture, here reproduced, of "Daniel's Answer to the King"—may very well be read as a little chapter of self-revelation. In the first painting we get the back of the prophet, he set one up in Addison Road, Kensington, when he lived there; later, set up another in Marlborough Road; whence he moved, still faithful to London's northern heights, to Finchley Road, and there began the work of re-edification over again. For nearly thirty years that painting-room, simple and spacious, and with none of the foppery that marks the studio of the *petit maître*, has sufficed for a painter whose own directness is part of his equipment for the painting of natural creatures. A painter of dogs, by the way, need not necessarily be himself a doggy man. The late Lord Russell of Killowen,

"AN ANXIOUS MOMENT." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

From the picture in the Collection of the Royal College, Holloway. Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Thomas Agnew and Sons, Old Bond Street, W., owners of the copyright and publishers of the large plate.

but the faces of the lions, which is as much as to betray to us the painter's own original estimate of his powers, his own preference of subject. Painter of human portraits he sometimes is; but a painter has not always his free choice of sitters; and perhaps not even the boy of his own who sat to him for a delightful charcoal sketch was so much to his mind for portrait purposes as the pigs he kept when he lived at Bromley. They appear in the "Circe" that has become, like so many of its fellows, popular throughout England. As a studio-builder, by the way, Mr. Riviere is by now something of an expert; for one remembers, would talk of anything but his cases when he came out of court; and Mr. Briton Riviere exists without a kennel, and has even been heard to say that he does not want to see a dog again once he closes for the day his studio door.

But it would be impossible for a painter who has been the colleague of animals so often in the production of pictures not to have a fellow-feeling for them that makes him wondrous kind to them. More, he knows their ways. When he goes into the studio, he refrains from looking at the dog who is to be on duty; for the dog sees that he is noticed, and gets nervous that something is

"THE HERON." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

going to happen. Sometimes a dog has to be kept in constant movement, and someone must play ball with him; and, yet again, the painter would give ten guineas for a minute of the dog's repose. St. John's Wood, the chosen haunt of the artist, is doubly the quarter for an animal-painter. He has there the Zoo at hand; and to the Zoo he can go, as Mr. Riviere has often gone, at six o'clock on a summer morning, to

"A FOOL AND HIS FOLLY." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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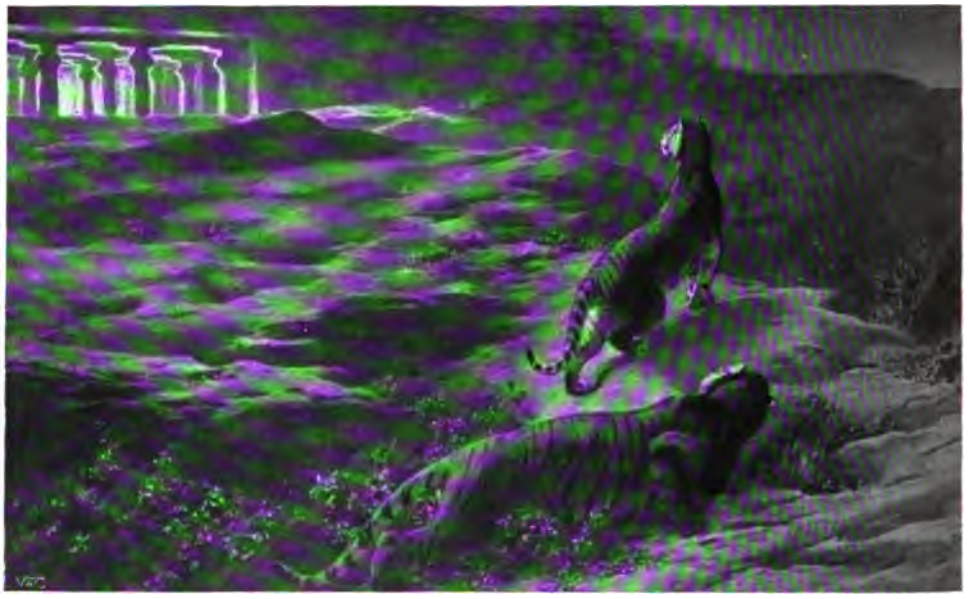
"YOUTH." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

In gret perell is set youthe,
Delite so doth his bridil leede.—CHAUCER.

see the beasts at breakfast. Once upon a time he was himself a sportsman; but he has painted himself out of a game between man and beast, conducted under conditions that are palpably unequal.

That is an attitude which would have won for Mr. Briton Riviere, had he been a seventeenth-century painter, a flattering footnote in Horace Walpole's "Anecdotes." He, too, was a lover of beauty in art and the beast in life; and when, one day, a rough-spoken friend told him that So-and-so must be going to turn Methodist, because, during a talk, he had risen to let a moth out of the room, Horace Walpole made haste to explain that



"THE HAUNTED TEMPLE." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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he, too, did that same courtesy to the straying winged one, though he had no intention of turning Methodist, not he! The eighteenth century is not a century of feeling, nor is Horace Walpole generally credited with being a man of feeling. No sentimentalist in his relations with "men, women, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagues," he yet recorded his admiration for a man who would not kill a fly, and his delight in the abolition of bear-fighting as a public pastime. Naturally, the modern painter is even more sensitive about animal suffering than the great connoisseur of a day which his letters have made contemporary for ever; and herein lies one of the many difficulties he has to encounter. If he could bring himself to discipline or coerce beasts for his purposes, he might get better sitters; though the trained animal must lack the life of impulse that Mr. Briton Riviere has set himself to retain. And among other obvious drawbacks to the animal painter chronicled in studio-chatter is this—that the artist can make no studies from himself to help on his own work betweenwhiles. The portrait-painter can look at his own features in the glass for a hint here or there. It was even said by one Academician of another, in the early days of the Academy, that when he painted a devil (as he commonly did), he had only to gaze into a mirror. Even the painter who said this fierce thing could have looked at his own reflection and found nothing to assist him in a presentment of—

> The lion maned in tawny majesty,
> The tiger, velvet barred,
> The stealthy-stepping pard.
> Or the lithe panther's flexuous symmetry.

Like all animal painters, Mr. Briton Riviere is a realist. He paints what he sees, but not, like other realists, at the moment or the week—as may be—of seeing it. He is an observer and note-taker who has to trust to memory, almost to imagination. Add to that the requisite power of construction, and the sense of a perfect adjustment of means to an end, and you have some of the qualities which a man must

"PERSEPOLIS." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

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possess before he can earn the praise which a foremost critic of the day has accorded in the following passage: "I have often had to refer to the vein of poetry running through Riviere's works. He has been a great reader and, like many painters, a great listener to reading. From all this he has come out with a truer sense than most painters of what literature can do for art. Many of his pictures are suggested by books, but in nearly every case the passage he has chosen is one with which paint can deal more completely than words. . . . Look at 'Persepolis.' Put the words of the Persian singer on the one side, and Riviere's picture on the other, and which is the richer in suggestion? . . . A picture is poetic in which every line and tint, every natural appearance, is brought into esoteric harmony with the passions treated. To my mind," continues Sir Walter Armstrong, "the great example of such intimate connection is Titian's 'Entombment.' Before that canvas we are unable to separate the emotions stirred by its conceptions as a work of art from those aroused by association. The two work together in the profoundest harmony, and, as we look, we cannot but confess that poetry, in painting as in writing, is the best arrangement of the best units. That sounds like a truism, yet how few painters realise its truth! I don't want to claim a place beside Titian for Briton Riviere, but at least he deserves such credit as belongs to the artist who can keep in view the unity of Nature, and when he sets himself to render some human drama, can give it a suitable *mise en scène*."

Mr. Briton Riviere has always been a humane painter in all senses of the word. He knows the "sylvan tendernesses" of which Mrs. Browning sang, and he knows the response made by man. Art for the world's sake, rather than art for art's sake, has been his watchword. Generally he has been content to teach and to preach by the mere records of the episodes—moving to tears or to laughter—of man's daily communication with animals. At times, however, he has chosen the allegory as a mode of conveying a morality. In "Youth," the abyss of danger yawns ahead; and bird and beast, rather than the human creature, are the first to take alarm. In some sense a pendant to that picture is the "*In Manus Tuas, Domine*," a picture which makes confession of the fact that from pitfalls on the path of advance there is no escape—the talisman is trust.

"REQUIESCAT." BY BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

LADY ANGELA'S METHODS.

By HARRISON RHODES.*

ON the wisdom of falling in love both early and often, no one could be more emphatic than Mr. Charles Edward Austin. In a career devoted, as his has been, to the pursuit of adventure, one would naturally expect that romantic attachments should have had a large part. Charles Edward, however, married some years ago, and now publicly bewails the fact that owing to a circumstance over which he has no control—a method, apparently, of alluding to his wife—he is debarred from placing his heart at the feet of each of the countless lovely women with whom the world is so agreeably provided. He lays it down as a distressing general rule that once you have met Lady Angela, your career as a gallant is near its end. The difficulty with falling in love with her is that you can't ever fall out again, and the objection to the course he took of marrying her is that, in spite of yourself, you present to the world an almost ideal instance of a husband irretrievably devoted to his wife even after years of matrimony. Lady Angela, in turn, accuses Charles Edward of having limited her life, and alludes darkly, sometimes, to a summer before she met her husband, when she flirted simultaneously with three young men and a curate. But on the whole, both display admirable resignation to the inevitable. Doomed by their unconquerable attachment to each other to serve as an example and as an incentive to matrimony in others, Charles Edward and Lady Angela have sometimes extracted amusement from urging, even helping them, towards the desired goal. It goes without saying that their methods of match-making have occasionally been unusual.

With the preliminaries of the Carson-Manning affair the Austins had nothing to do. They arrived at Madame de Touquefort's on a Saturday, and by this time much of the mischief had been done. For David Manning and his son Winslow had come from Paris on Tuesday, and Esther Carson had arrived from London by the Havre boat early Wednesday morning. Of course, if Miss Carson had so much as suspected that the Mannings were to be in the same house with her during the Trouville races, she would never have come. In defence of Madame de Touquefort, it can only be said that she had met the Mannings in Paris, and Miss Carson in London. Yet it seems almost incredible that her American cousins had never told her anything of that war between David Manning and John Carson, which was, ten years ago, the most sensational in the history of Wall Street. The two men seemed opposed to each other by some inevitable antagonism of masterful temperaments. What had perhaps been originally a mere business rivalry became a bitter personal feud in which quarter was neither asked nor given. They were hard men—or, at least, became so, as in the long fight they successively tasted the bitter and the sweet. Towards the end it seemed as though Manning had gone to the wall. Yet he rallied, gathered his last resources, stretched his credit and that of his friends to the very breaking-point, and began the sensational operations in cotton which made that year a memorable one. At the end of it, John Carson was a broken and a ruined man. It seemed as though he had staked his all, even to his life. For three months he lay scarcely alive, yet to the very last his eye lit up fiercely at the mention of David Manning's name. As to the victor, no softening, no regrets came with his rival's death. He remembered the days when he had been fighting with his back to the wall, and Carson had shown no mercy.

Unconsciously Madame de Touquefort had brought lowering thunderclouds into the clear, gay sky of Trouville race week. There were, of course, no scenes. There was cold and haughty politeness for a day, and then Winslow Manning and Miss Carson, to their astonishment — one might almost say, to their horror — discovered that they were falling in love. It was astounding, but perhaps not wholly inexplicable. Heredity works sometimes by contraries; and as the

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"On the whole, both display admirable resignation to the inevitable."

fathers had seemed armed by Fate as enemies, so the children appeared designed by the same power as friends—and something more. Both faced the danger squarely; indeed, by Sunday they were counting opportunities of facing it.

The situation, so Charles Edward remarked, when he began to see it, had occurred in Verona before it happened at Trouville, though Winslow Manning lacked some of the poetic charm of Romeo, and Esther Carson was Juliet—with a difference. Lady Angela, philosophising later upon the matter, hazarded the interesting literary suggestion that had Juliet been the only Capulet left, she might have felt herself the natural prosecutor of the family feud. At any rate, Miss Carson did not bury the traditional hatchet, but even when she had thrown herself into Winslow Manning's arms, continued (in this position) to brandish it at his father. Her definite demand was that David Manning should come to the daughter of the man he had most hated in the whole world, and with all the forms of humility and politeness beg her to do his son the honour of marrying him. Winslow Manning, after an interview with his father, had the sensation of facing a blank wall.

In spite of the fact that Charles Edward and Lady Angela seem unusually light-hearted and frivolous persons, it is in such situations in life that people turn to them. They took Winslow to walk in the late afternoon up a wandering, grass-covered road to a tiny *café* on the hill-top, where across beds of flowers and an animated chicken-yard you catch glimpses of the roofs of Trouville and the sea beyond; and

there, over a jug of Normandy cider, he talked to them of Esther and hinted at his troubles.

"It must be old Mr. Manning who's making the difficulties," said Charles Edward to his wife when they were alone.

Lady Angela meditatively let her hand rest upon her husband's for a moment and gave a little sigh.

"We have minded our own business for as much as a week, Charles Edward," she said.

"I know, my dear," was the apologetic reply; "but when one is travelling, it is really rather difficult to interfere in other people's."

"But now——" began Angela.

"Of course, if you intend taking charge of the matter," said Charles Edward, "Winslow might as well arrange the date of his wedding."

II.

UNTIL evening, Lady Angela found no opportunity of talking with David Manning, and even no plan of attack. With no fantastic mode of presenting her argument ready, she saw herself reduced to a simple appeal to the man's humanity. One might have thought, perhaps, that a delicate creature, accustomed to look always on the happier side of life, would have been terrified to face so hard and unrelenting an antagonist, but such a judgment would only have shown ignorance of the stuff that was in her. During dinner she talked nonsense of the frothiest kind to her end of the table; but after it was over, a look passed between her and Charles Edward, she raised her head a little higher, shot a parting of the merriest sort at the little group around her, and walked over to David Manning.

A few moments later, Madame de Touquefort's guests were chattering and laughing as they strolled along the moonlit high-road towards Criquebœuf. It happens that the saint to whom the quaint, ivy-covered church of that small hamlet is dedicated is so modish as to have his festival come just after the finish of the Trouville races, and a visit to the fair which is annually organised in the tiny village is always in Madame de Touquefort's programme for her house-party.

At the end of the procession walked David Manning and Lady Angela. The old man was chuckling, for the girl was rattling on as she had at dinner. Suddenly she spoke in a changed tone.

"It's ridiculous, perhaps you'll think, Mr. Manning, but I want to talk to you very seriously about something."

"Dear Lady Angela," was the reply, "it's ridiculous that you should already have talked so long and so nicely to an old man." The speech was flattering, yet somehow it did not exactly invite her to go on.

"I want you to let your son marry Esther Carson. Don't hate me for interfering."

"Interference is not possible."

"You can't know what a splendid girl she is."

"I don't want her references, my dear, any more than Winslow does."

"He loves her very much."

"Then he hasn't changed since yesterday."

A railroad man who once endeavoured to put before Manning a proposition to which the latter did not wish to listen, said after the interview that Mr. Manning had wonderful "terminal facilities." The jest, readjusted, would have expressed Lady Angela's feelings. They walked on a little way in silence. The road rose to the crest of a little hill, and from here they saw the flashing of the fireworks display which made that night memorable to every child in Criquebœuf. But Lady Angela's mind was far away—in Wall Street.

"You hated Esther's father?" she said finally in a low voice.

"Yes."

"And you——" she stopped; then took her courage in both hands again. "And you ruined him?"

"Yes"—Mr. Manning sent a sidewise glance at the girl at his side—"after he had tried to do the same by me, and in ways that I didn't always think quite fair."

"I see," said Lady Angela gravely. "But that doesn't make this quite fair to Esther. Don't forbid the marriage, Mr. Manning."

"Winslow's of age," was the calm reply. "I don't forbid the marriage."

"Then you threaten to cut him off with a shilling, or something like that."

"No."

"Or turn him out of your business."

"I'm not such a fool as to do that. Winslow is too valuable a man. I'd give him a rise of salary in order to keep him."

"I don't quite understand. If you're not forbidding, or threatening, or discharging, what is it you're doing?"

"I'm refusing to go down on my knees to John Carson's penniless daughter and beg her to do me the honour of marrying my son."

"Esther's very proud," murmured Lady Angela; then "It's so little to do," she pleaded.

"Then it's little they have to complain of. If Miss Carson's a chip of the old block, all she'll want is an assurance that the money's all right."

"Can't you see that she couldn't ever be happy if she thought she had separated you and Winslow. Can't you be a little kind?"

"I'm willing to be, to the tune of about half a million."

"Just giving money isn't kindness," protested Lady Angela.

"A considerable number of people seem to want me to help them. Well, if I offered them a kind word or a cheque, which do you think they'd rather see me have, dumbness or writer's cramp? Kindness without expense!" he continued scornfully. "I know about what that's worth in the world."

"Mr. Manning," said Lady Angela in a low voice, "you're a hard man. I see what that means now. You've forgotten how to do a kindness except behind the shelter of a cheque."

"A sentimental view, I'm afraid, my dear," rapped out Manning, his mouth settling into a grim smile. "I don't allow myself to get off with cheap kindnesses, but I expect I could do them as easily as the next man."

"I wonder if you could," mused Lady Angela. Then her colour came back, and the ghost of a smile began to tremble on her lips. But the moon went behind a cloud just then, and David Manning never saw. Besides, his experience, unlike Lady Angela's and Charles Edward's, had not taught him how much may sometimes be made to hang upon the proving of an abstract truth.

"If I were a betting man," continued the girl, with a drawl—"and Charles Edward says if I were a man, that's what I should be—I would bet you that in the next half-hour you couldn't do a single kindness without spending money."

"Taken," said Mr. Manning. "What are the stakes?"

"Oh, lunch at the Casino to-morrow," was the gay reply. Then suddenly she put her hand upon his arm: "And I'll take back what I said. And I should so like to take it back. Say you would like me to."

"Wait till I've won the bet," was her antagonist's dry advice, but a small hand was allowed to rest a half-minute longer upon an old man's arm.

III.

ANYONE who has a real taste for the simple pleasures of the Latin races, and who knows how a French village celebrates its *fête*-day, will realise that no mere evening visit, such as Madame de Touquefort's guests were accustomed to make, could do justice to the *foire* at Criquebœuf. It is the opinion of the present writer that three or four days of constant attention and study—that is what the village children give—are necessary. On Friday, one ought to witness the arrival of the merry-go-round and consider the processes of putting up tents and booths. One might do worse than to spend Saturday watching the carpenter build and decorate a small musician's gallery at the turn of the road for the *bal champêtre*. One gets a better chance before the Sunday of judging the rival attractions of the shooting-galleries, and one can read more at one's leisure the posters of the *Palais des Singes*—the Palace of the Monkeys—a small shed in which these animals, somewhat vaguely and grandiloquently described in the advertising matter as "40 Artists 40," may be heard occasionally squeaking. Down the lane one can find the vans where some of the show-people—surely the nicest—live. One can hear conversation of an unusually animated character at the *cafés*, for the price of a bock. Friday and Saturday, in short, cannot wisely be missed.

It would be a pleasure to dwell upon the delights of Sunday morning. The parade of the volunteer firemen of Criquebœuf—and there were quite ten of them—dressed in red and blue, and surmounted by glittering helmets, had been remarkable. The climbing of the greased pole had been inspiring, though in the interests of justice one would like to expose the band of professionals who go from hamlet to hamlet along the Normandy coast, and snatch from the top of each local *mât de cocagne* the fluttering trophies which ought to go to the boys of the village. But the scope of the present narrative restricts one to the evening.

A brisk and animated scene was presented by the little stretch of road occupied by the fair. The booths blazed with lights, and what twenty francs of municipal money expended in Japanese lanterns could do had been done to adorn the *fête*. Strains of music from the merry-go-round and the shooting-gallery mingled deliciously with the occasional squeals of the "artists" in their Palace, the clink of glasses in front of the *cafés*, the whir of wheels-of-fortune, and the lively hum of conversation. Criquebœuf was a delight to all, and especially to Charles Edward.

He was engaged, with most of the Tou-

"'We have minded our own business for as much as a week,' she said."

quefort party, in venturing his money in a game in which a brightly painted little train of cars was sent whirling round in a circle, while the spectators made bets as to which of the small stations, named after the principal Normandy towns, would be its ultimate stopping-place.

David Manning and Lady Angela came into the glare of lights last of all, and viewed a throng of people too ostentatiously happy, one would have said, to be the object of any kindliness.

"If you like to be kind by yourself, Mr. Manning, I can join the others."

Her companion consulted his watch.

"Oh, I've twenty-five minutes yet. Let's enjoy ourselves," and enjoy themselves they did for at least five, during which Lady Angela, by risking two *sous* upon a wheel-of-fortune, became the happy possessor of a tea-cup decorated with a view of the Trouville Casino. Then they strolled a step further and stopped in front of a shooting-range. Lady Angela suddenly gave a little gasp.

The shooting-range backed upon a tiny meadow, across which, by the light of two flaring torches, could be seen three targets, white, with a six-inch aperture at the bull's eye. Behind each an unhappy duck, tied by the leg, at intervals darted an agitated head across the opening. For one *sou*, the proprietor announced, a duck was yours, provided you could hit him.

David Manning turned to Lady Angela with a knowing smile, and then to the proprietor of the enterprise with one even more ingratiating. "Poor beasts," he murmured, and one might almost have seen the mystic letters S.P.C.A. glowing in a halo about his head. He advanced, and as he was about to

speak of the cruelty being practised, his hand instinctively sought his side, and there jingled the duck's ransom. Then suddenly his air of mastery deserted him, and withdrawing a limp hand from his pocket, he shot a sidelong glance at Lady Angela. She shook her head, her face solemn, but a mocking twinkle in her eye.

"Not a *sou*," she said. "Cheap kindnesses, if you please, to-day."

Persuading a foreigner to humanity in a language over which one has the incompletest control is not to anyone a particularly congenial task; to David Manning, whose sense of the ridiculous was keen, it was not made any pleasanter by the fact that the owner of the ducks took the whole thing as a charming joke.

"*Ah, cruelle-mourir!*" he repeated after Mr. Manning, lending to the phrase by intonation and gesture all the feeling of a romantic tenor. Then he held out a gun to his playful friend and waved a hand invitingly at the captive birds. Lady Angela could bear it no longer; she gurgled with half-suppressed laughter, and Manning beat a hurried retreat. But even in matters like this he was no man to take defeat without exhausting every resource, and to her astonishment in half a minute he was back again. This time Lady Angela was genuinely alarmed. Two young Englishmen, apparently over from Trouville after an excellent dinner, were discussing their chances of shooting straight. Upon them their compatriot felt that Mr. Manning's "*cruelle-mourir*," put into simple English, might have an effect; and indeed, when the American with bluff heartiness of manner suggested that this sort of thing was not quite sportsmanlike, however much it might please the French, good instincts combined with insular pride to make them put down their guns. For once Lady Angela regretted the good qualities of her race.

Still, deserted by Fate though she was, she must face defeat, so, pulling herself together, she raised her eyes and saw assistance coming from an unexpected quarter.

A Frenchman whose amazing *costume de sport* Lady Angela remembered noticing near by at the beginning of the episode, and whose face she remembered disliking, stood with one hand nervously on a gun, while he regarded with lowering gaze the American who thought an unworthy sport might still be worthy of the French.

"*Tiens! ce n'est pas du vrai sport?* Not true sport, isn't it? Because these English don't know how to shoot, perhaps," he remarked straight at the Saxons. Then rapidly, in quick succession, he shot the three ducks. A gasp of admiration for his marksmanship went up, and Lady Angela slipped in a remark to Mr. Manning—

"You killed the three of them in the end, you see."

Mr. Manning saw. So they passed on.

Charles Edward had by this time inspired most of the lookers-on at the dancing to cry loudly for *le cake-walk*, and was exerting all his charm of manner to persuade two lady bicyclists in dashing and Parisian costumes to an exhibition of this form of metropolitan gaiety. But Mr. Manning seemed to see no opportunity for an overflow of the milk of human kindness here.

There was a moment of danger near the Café de la Cascade. The elderly servant of the establishment was painfully lugging an enormous pail of water from the well in the orchard. Mr. Manning, with a vivacity of movement unusual at his age, bounded to her side and tried to relieve her of her burden, while Lady Angela waited in tremulous anxiety. But Augustine, agitated by this attack upon her by a total stranger, tugged at the bucket, which was thus upset over her stout ankles and her calico skirt. The shrill protests of the victim of kindness mingled with Lady Angela's laughter and, ultimately, with Mr. Manning's. He had struggled with his sense of humour in vain.

The third incident would have seemed on the face of it unassailable. Just in front of the church a child started to cross the road. It met with the usual accident, tripped, fell, lifted an unattractive and tear-stained face, and emitted an unmusical cry. With apparent tenderness, Mr. Manning raised it and mopped its face awkwardly with an immaculate silk handkerchief. Had he been content to let well enough alone, this story might never have been written. But he dimly remembered the literary conventions of kindness and insisted on restoring the unwilling child to its mother, who presided over a wheel-of-fortune near by, quite unconscious of the accident to her offspring. Lady Angela—and it was sportsmanlike of her—explained the fortunate coincidence by which Mr. Manning had been near to offer sympathy and aid.

"Ah!" cried the fond parent, "you will run away, will you, little monster!" and reversing the child upon her knee, she dealt —a death-blow to Mr. Manning's hopes, let

"At the end of the procession walked David Manning and Lady Angela.".

us say. He retreated before the cries of the victim of his third kindness.

By this time he and Lady Angela had reached the end of the fair and could see the shadowy stretch of road beyond and the waving trees by its side. In this corner a feeble old lantern dimly lighted a neglected enterprise, a queer, dilapidated old bagatelle-board. Years ago, before the big firms at Rouen and Lisieux began to send out their splendid games, gay with paint and mirrors and cut crystal, and going on to the sound of music, it might have been the delight of Criquebœuf. But now, with boards half rotten, balls rough, cues untrue, it stood no chance. By its side sat in silence an old man and an old woman, accepting failure in the dumb and despairing way of peasants. The man occasionally muttered in a hopeless voice the price of a turn, and the woman held up in a thin brown hand the packet of cigars from which prizes were to be given to winners. Manning's hand went to his pocket and brought out a coin. Lady Angela shook her head and smiled, though her eyes were suspiciously moist.

"I know it doesn't count," said the culprit; "still, I'm not forbidden to do it." He laid the silver piece on the edge of the bagatelle-board.

"My luck's devilish to-day," he continued. "It makes me actually long to be kind, it does really, Lady Angela. But you'll have to admit, no one could be kind to-night."

"Charles Edward could," replied that young gentleman's wife bravely, her head raised a little defiantly while she challenged Mr. Manning with a pair of clear blue eyes.

"Let him have a try, then," replied the old man, with a quizzical expression. "Give him ten minutes, then I'll have my five. If he succeeds, I will, if it takes—— Well, I'll succeed."

At this moment Charles Edward appeared. His introduction of *le cake-walk* must have given satisfaction, for though he was perhaps not exactly followed by a crowd, he was evidently producing a drift of people in his direction. Lady Angela called him to her side.

"Charles Edward," she said, "you have ten minutes to do a real kindness."

"Name it," he replied promptly, bowing politely from the waist in the French fashion.

"That's what I can't do. You must invent it, and without spending a penny."

Charles Edward turned his trousers pockets inside out.

"Manifestly," he said; "I think I'll make some instead. But is this kindness very pressing, Angela? Because they say there is an educated pig——"

"I've no doubt there is," interrupted his wife. "But you've wasted a minute already, and that leaves you only nine."

"Of course, I know," began Charles Edward, "that I've the kindest nature. But shall I lavish its riches on you or on Mr. Manning?"

"Fifteen seconds on that speech," commented Lady Angela, watch in hand.

Charles Edward paused. His eyes roved searchingly around, while with studied slowness he readjusted a brown cravat and fastened it with a pin of jade and gold. Ultimately he saw the ancient and honourable game of bagatelle. He made a gesture as of inquiry towards it.

"Yes," assented Mr. Manning, with a look of comprehension, "but one is not allowed to give money."

"Ah!" said Charles Edward with an elaborate air of vagueness—a trained observer would have known it as the calm which immediately precedes effervescence. Then "Time me, Angela!" he cried, and advanced to the proprietors of the game, lifting his hat ceremoniously.

"I make you a business proposition," he said to the bewildered pair. "Some noise must be made. I can make it for a quarter of the profits. Well, that's agreed."

It had not been agreed, because the old people were much too confused by this dashing young *milord*—for such he appeared to be—to gather the meaning of his words. But when they saw him mount upon a chair and prepare to address the inhabitants of Criquebœuf, they began to realise that he might almost have been sent by the saint in answer to the prayers for success they had said that morning in the little church. To such an emissary twenty-five per cent. would not be too much.

"Messieurs, mesdames!" began Charles Edward, "I, the new partner, have to advise you that this place has changed hands. This bagatelle game, brought painfully here by these two brave old people, has been shamefully neglected for the tawdry and vulgar machines I see farther down the road. Perhaps you do not realise that you have before you the sport of kings, the last cry of modishness in the capitals of the world. Upon such a rare and authentic antiquity as the one now offered for your pleasure does King Edward of England play with the Prince of Wales and the Lord Mayor of

"Became the happy possessor of a tea-cup."

London for rare Havana cigars of the same brand, messieurs, and especially mesdames, as I and my partners now offer as prizes. I myself—*moi qui vous parle*—have seen the strenuous Roosevelt playing with his Cabinet. The Ambassador of France at Petersburg, has, I understand, being trying to secure one of these boards and some of these famous cigars, in order to offer an evening's pleasure to the Sovereign of the friendly and allied Power. By the rarest of good chances, a veritable bagatelle-board of the famous 1820 period is in this village. Come!" he cried to the laughing crowd which had gathered round him, "come, before it is too late! Even now the emissaries of the Ambassador may have heard of the treasure of Criquebœuf. The price is a *franc* a turn. The modern games of this fair are a *sou*, but they are not bagatelle. The Heir-Apparent to the throne of Roumania allows nothing but gold upon his board. The

money, messieurs, will not come amiss to our friends here ; and when his Excellency the Ambassador has purchased the board, they will gladly refund you your *francs*. My quarter interest in the profits I propose to give to Monsieur the Curé of Criquebœuf, for his poor. They tell me that life here is not so gay as it is to-night, when winter comes. Let us make it more gay then and (here he descended from his rostrum) more gay now. Advance, messieurs and mesdames ! A *franc* a try ! The game of kings and the cigars so beloved of His Majesty of England !"

Messieurs and mesdames as well advanced in great numbers. Somehow Charles Edward had tickled the French sense of humour, and somehow he had touched the French heart. *Francs* tumbled in, while above the talk and laughter rose from time to time Charles Edward's cry : "Avancez, messieurs, mesdames ! "

"Time ! " said Lady Angela in a low voice, not so loud as to disturb her husband. "Shall we stop him ? " she asked the old man at her side.

"No."

"Do you suppose, Mr. Manning, that it's because he's mine that I like what he's just done so much ? '

"He's a nice boy, my dear. But I suspect you've made him nicer since he's been yours."

"Oh, I don't think I've any influence over anyone," she protested. "All I do is to admire, and like, and—love people who are like that."

"He's an ingenious young devil, too. He's made me in danger of losing my bet, I'm afraid."

At this point it must be left to the reader to judge of Lady Angela's simplicity or the deepness of her guile.

"Oh, it doesn't matter about the bet," she said. Her eyes were cast down and her voice trembled a little. "It was a silly bet, anyway."

"Oh, no," said Mr. Manning, "I mean to get that lunch."

"I take back what I said, anyway. Of course you can be kind. To-day it was only my luck that stopped you. This was only my foolish little scheme—oh, of course you saw through that. But it was because I was so sorry for Winslow and for Esther, and they're both dears ; and I'm sure if you offered to go to Esther, she'd come straight to you ; and I couldn't see why you—— Well, anyway, Charles Edward and I may be very frivolous, but we did want to help."

And here Lady Angela did what was either very wicked or very human—perhaps in any case it was human—she began to cry a little very softly, there with the torches of Criquebœuf Fair flaring all around her.

A ridiculously small watch hung from a bracelet on her wrist. Rather clumsily the elder Manning took her hand and patted it.

"Don't cry, my dear," he said, and then he consulted the watch.

"Two minutes," he announced. "A good lunch, mind you. I expect you to do it handsomely."

"Well," said Lady Angela in a shaken voice, while she dabbed at her eyes, "if it comes to that, you haven't really won the bet."

"But I've got a minute more," was the answer. "And I think I can do a kindness if you can find Winslow and Miss Carson."

Then Lady Angela did another very wicked and obnoxious thing. The torches still flared all around her, yet she suddenly kissed Mr. Manning on the cheek.

It was the sight of this which caused Charles Edward abruptly to terminate his partnership in bagatelle.

"Angela's a nice girl, isn't she ? " was his comment to Mr. Manning. "And you must be all right, sir, for she's been so well brought up that she only kisses the very nicest men. When's Winslow to be married ? "

There are really only a few more facts worth telling in this story. Lady Angela kissed Mr. Manning a second time, quite publicly, and at a wedding. Also the Winslow Mannings' child was christened Angela. Had it been a boy, it is not improbable it might have been called Charles Edward. There are worse names.

AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Sheltered awhile in a Buddhist monastery, they hear of the recent visit of a stranger who has told the Lamas that his countryfolk, "dwelling beyond the Far Mountains," worship a priestess called Hes, or the Hesea, and upon persuasion the abbot of the monastery tells them that in a former incarnation he himself has seen the great priestess, who was "all loveliness."

CHAPTER III.

THE BEACON LIGHT.

A WEEK later came our opportunity of making this ascent of the mountain, for now in midwinter it ceased storming, and hard frost set in, which made it possible to walk upon the surface of the snow. Learning from the monks that at this season *ovis poli*, and other kinds of big-horned sheep and game, descended from the hills to take refuge in certain valleys, where they scraped away the snow to find food, we announced that we were going out to hunt. The excuse we gave was that we were suffering from confinement and needed exercise, having, by the teaching of our religion, no scruples about killing game.

Our hosts replied that the adventure was dangerous, as the weather might change at any moment. They told us, however, that on the slopes of this very mountain, which we desired to climb, there was a large natural cave where, if need be, we could take shelter, and to this cave one of them, somewhat younger and more active than the rest, offered to guide us. So, having manufactured a rough tent from skins, and laden our old yak, now in the best of condition, with food and garments, on one still morning we started as soon as it was light. Under the guidance of the monk, who, notwithstanding his years, walked very well, we reached the northern slope of the peak before midday. Here, as he had said, we found a great cave, of which the opening was protected by an overhanging ledge of rock. Evidently this cave was a favourite place of shelter for game at certain seasons of the year, since in it were heaped vast accumulations of their droppings, which removed any fear of a lack of fuel.

The rest of that short day we spent in setting up our tent in the cave, in front of which we lit a large fire, and in a survey of the slopes of the mountain, for we told the monk that we were searching for the tracks of wild sheep. Indeed, as it happened, on our way back to the cave we came across a small herd of ewes feeding upon the mosses in a sheltered spot where in summer a streamlet ran. Of these we were so fortunate as to kill two, for no sportsman had ever come here, and they were tame enough, poor things. As meat would keep for ever in that temperature, we had now sufficient food to last us for a fortnight, and dragging the animals down the snow-slopes to the cave, we skinned them by the dying light.

That evening we supped upon fresh mutton, a great luxury, which the monk enjoyed as much as we did, since, whatever might be his views as to taking life, he liked mutton. Then we turned into the tent and huddled ourselves together for warmth, as the temperature must have been some degrees

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below zero. The old monk rested well enough, but neither Leo nor I slept overmuch, for wonder as to what we might see from the top of that mountain banished sleep.

Next morning at the dawn, the weather being still favourable, our companion returned to the monastery, whither we said we would follow him in a day or two.

Now at last we were alone, and without wasting an instant began our ascent of the peak. It was many thousand feet high, and in certain places steep enough, but the deep, frozen snow made climbing easy, so that by midday we reached the top. Hence the view was magnificent. Beneath us stretched the desert, and beyond it a broad belt of fantastically shaped, snow-clad mountains, hundreds and hundreds of them—in front, to the right, to the left, as far as the eye could reach.

"They are just as I saw them in my dream so many years ago," muttered Leo: "the same, the very same."

"And where was the fiery light?" I asked.

"Yonder, I think," and he pointed north by east.

"Well, it is not there now," I answered, "and this place is cold."

So, since it was dangerous to linger, lest the darkness should overtake us on our return journey, we descended the peak again, reaching the cave about sunset. The next four days we spent in the same way. Every morning we crawled up those wearisome banks of snow, and every afternoon we slid and tobogganed down them again, till I grew heartily tired of the exercise.

On the fourth night, instead of coming to sleep in the tent, Leo sat himself down at the entrance to the cave. I asked him why he did this, but he answered impatiently, because he wished it, so I left him alone. I could see, indeed, that he was in a strange and irritable mood, for the failure of our search oppressed him. Moreover, we knew, both of us, that it could not be much prolonged, since the weather might break at any moment, when ascents of the mountain would become impossible.

In the middle of the night I was awakened by Leo shaking me and saying—

"Come here, Horace; I have something to show you."

Reluctantly enough I crept from between the rugs and out of the tent. To dress there was no need, for we slept in all our garments. He led me to the mouth of the cave and pointed northward. I looked. The night was very dark; but far, far away appeared a faint patch of light upon the sky, such as might be caused by the reflection of a distant fire.

"What do you make of it?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing in particular," I answered; "it may be anything. The moon—no, there is none; dawn—no, it is too northerly, and it does not break for three hours. Something burning, a house, or a funeral pyre; but how can there be such things here? I give it up!"

"I think it is a reflection, and that if we were on the peak, we should see the light which throws it," said Leo slowly.

"Yes, but we are not, and cannot get there in the dark."

"Then, Horace, we must spend a night there."

"It will be our last in this incarnation," I answered with a laugh, "that is—if it comes on to snow."

"We must risk it—or I will risk it. Look, the light has faded"; and there at least he was right, for undoubtedly it had. The night was as black as pitch.

"Let's talk it over to-morrow," I said, and went back to the tent, for I was sleepy and incredulous, but Leo sat on by the mouth of the cave.

At dawn I awoke and found breakfast already cooked.

"I must start early," Leo explained.

"Are you mad?" I asked. "How can we camp on that place?"

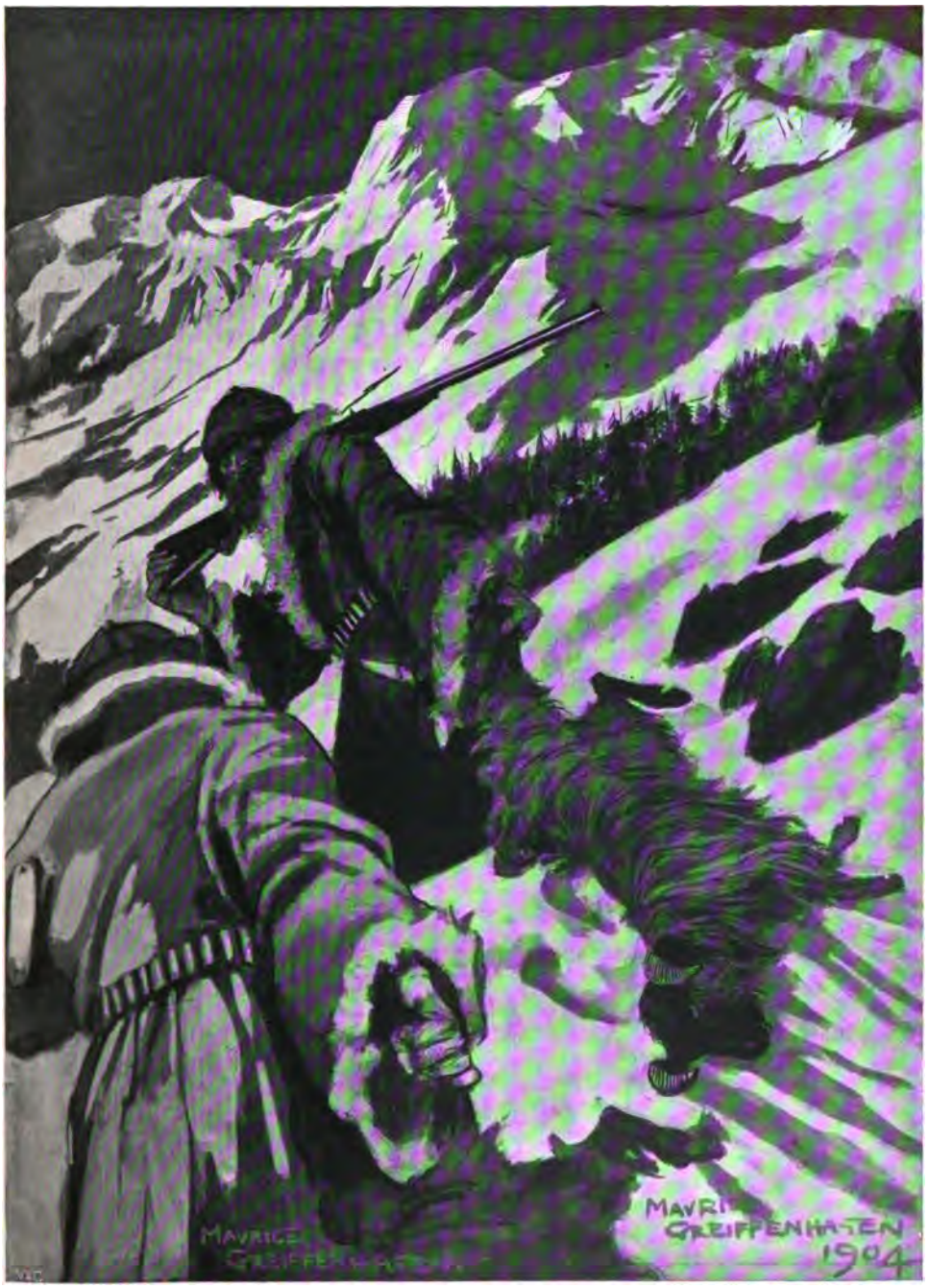
"I don't know, but I am going. I must go, Horace."

"Which means that we both must go. But how about the yak?"

"Where we can climb, it can follow," he answered.

So we strapped the tent and other baggage, including a good supply of cooked meat, upon the beast's back, and started. The tramp was long, since we were obliged to make some detours to avoid slopes of frozen snow in which, on our previous ascents, we had cut footholds with an axe, for up these the laden animal could not clamber. Reaching the summit at length, we dug a hole, and there pitched the tent, piling the excavated snow about its sides. By this time it began to grow dark, and having descended into the tent, yak and all, we ate our food and waited.

Oh, what cold was that! The frost was fearful, and at this height a wind blew whose icy breath passed through all our wrappings and seemed to burn our flesh beneath as



"Dragging the animals down the snow-slopes."

though with hot irons. It was fortunate that we had brought the yak, for without the warmth from its shaggy body I believe that we should have perished even in our tent. For some hours we watched, as indeed we must, since to sleep might mean to die, yet saw nothing save the lonely stars, and heard nothing in that awful silence, for here even the wind made no noise as it slid across the snows. Accustomed as I was to such exposure, my faculties began to grow numb and my eyes to shut, when suddenly Leo said—

"Look, below the red star!"

I looked, and there, high in the sky, was the same curious glow which we had seen upon the previous night. There was more than this indeed, for beneath it, almost on a line with us and just above the crests of the intervening peaks, appeared a faint sheet of fire, and, revealed against it, something black. Whilst we watched, the fire widened, spread upwards, and grew in power and intensity. Now against its flaming background the black object became clearly visible, and lo! it was the top of a soaring pillar surmounted by a loop. Yes, we could see its every outline. It was the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself.

The symbol vanished, the fire sank. Again it blazed up, more fiercely than before, and the loop appeared afresh, then once more disappeared. A third time the fire shone, and with such intensity that no lightning could surpass its brilliance. All around the heavens were lit up, and through the black, needle-shaped eye of the symbol, as from the flare of a beacon or the searchlight of a ship, one fierce ray shot across the sea of mountain-tops and the spaces of the desert, straight as an arrow to the lofty peak on which we lay. Yes, it lit upon the snow, staining it red, and upon the wild, white faces of us who watched, though to the right and left of us spread thick darkness. My compass lay before me on the snow, and I could even see its needle; and beyond us the shape of a white fox that had crept near, scenting food. Then it was gone as swiftly as it came. Gone, too, were the symbol and the veil of flame behind it; only the glow lingered a little on the distant sky.

For awhile there was silence between us, then Leo said—

"Do you remember, Horace, when we lay upon the Rocking Stone where *her* cloak fell upon me——" as he said the words, the breath caught in his throat—"how the ray of light was sent to us in farewell, and to show us a path of escape from the Place of Death? Now I think that it has been sent again in greeting to point out the path to the Place of Life where Ayesha dwells, whom we have lost."

"It may be so," I answered shortly, for the matter was beyond speech or argument, beyond wonder even. But I knew then, as I know now, that we were players in some mighty, predestined drama; that our parts were written and we must speak them, as our path was prepared and we must tread it to the end unknown. Fear and doubt were left behind, hope was lost in certainty; the foreshadowing visions of the night had found an actual fulfilment, and the pitiful seed of the promise of her who died, growing unseen through all the cruel, empty years, had come to harvest.

No, we feared no more, not even when with the dawn rose the roaring wind, through which we struggled down the mountain-slopes, as it would seem in peril of our lives at every step; not even as hour by hour we fought our way onwards through the whirling snowstorm, that made us deaf and blind. For we knew that those lives were charmed. We could not see or hear, yet we were led. Clinging to the yak, we struggled downward and homewards, till at length out of the turmoil and the gloom its instinct brought us unharmed to the door of the monastery, where the old abbot embraced us in his joy, and the monks put up prayers of thanks. For they were sure that we must be dead. Through such a storm, they said, no man had ever lived before.

* * * * *

It was still midwinter, and oh! the awful weariness of those months of waiting. In our hands was the key, yonder amongst those mountains lay the door, but not yet might we set that key within its lock. For between us and these stretched the great desert, where the snow rolled like billows, and until that snow melted we dared not attempt its passage. So we sat in the monastery and schooled our hearts to patience.

Still, even to these frozen wilds of Central Asia spring comes at last. One evening the air felt warm, and that night there were only a few degrees of frost. The next the clouds banked up, and in the morning not snow was falling from them, but rain, and we found the old monks preparing their instruments of husbandry, as they said that the season of sowing was at hand. For three days it rained, while the snows melted before our eyes. On the fourth, torrents of water

were rushing down the mountain, and the desert was once more brown and bare, though not for long, for within another week it was carpeted with flowers. Then we knew that the time had come to start.

"But whither go you? Whither go you?" asked the old abbot in dismay. "Are you not happy here? Do you not make great strides along the Path, as may be known by your pious conversation? Is not everything that we have your own? Oh! why would you leave us?"

"We are wanderers," we answered, "and when we see mountains in front of us, we must cross them."

Kou-en looked at us shrewdly, then asked—

"What do you seek beyond the mountains? And, my brethren, what merit is gathered by hiding the truth from an old man, for such concealments are separated from falsehoods but by the length of a single barleycorn. Tell me, that at least my prayers may accompany you."

"Holy abbot," I said, "awhile ago yonder in the library you made a certain confession to us."

"Oh! remind me not of it," he said, holding up his hands. "Why do you wish to torment me?"

"Far be the thought from us, most kind friend and virtuous man," I answered. "But, as it chances, your story is very much our own, and we think that we have experience of this same priestess."

"Speak on," he said, much interested.

So I told him the outlines of our tale; for an hour or more I told it, while he sat opposite to us swaying his head like a tortoise and saying nothing. At length it was done.

"Now," I added, "let the lamp of your wisdom shine upon our darkness. Do you not find this story wondrous, or do you perchance think that we are liars?"

"Brethren of the great monastery called the World," Kou-en answered with his customary chuckle, "why should I think you liars, who, from the moment my eyes fell upon you, knew you to be true men? Moreover, why should I hold this tale so very wondrous? You have but stumbled upon the fringe of a truth with which we have been acquainted for many, many ages.

"Because in a vision she showed you this monastery, and led you to a spot beyond the mountains where she vanished, you hope that this woman whom you saw die is reincarnated yonder. Why not? In this there is nothing impossible to those who are instructed in the truth, though the lengthening of her last life was strange and contrary to experience. Doubtless you will find her there as you expect, and doubtless her *khama*, or identity, is the same as that which in some earlier life of hers once brought me to sin.

"Only be not mistaken, she is no immortal; nothing is immortal. She is but a being held back by her own pride, her own greatness if you will, upon the path towards Nirvana. That pride will be humbled, as already it has been humbled; that brow of majesty will be sprinkled with the dust of change and death, that sinful spirit will be purified by sorrows and by separations. Brother Leo, if you win her, it will be but to lose, and then the ladder must be re-climbed. Brother Holly, for you as for me, loss is our only gain, since thereby we are spared much woe. Oh! bide here and pray with me. Why dash yourselves against a rock? Why labour to pour water into a broken jar whence it must sink into the sands of profitless experience, and there be wasted, whilst you remain athirst?"

"Water makes the sand fertile," I answered. "Where water falls, life comes, and sorrow is the seed of joy."

"Love is the law of life," broke in Leo; "without love there is no life. I seek love that I may live. I believe that all these things are ordained to an end which we do not know. Fate draws me on—I fulfil my fate——"

"And do but delay your freedom. Yet I will not argue with you, brother, who must follow your own road. See now, what has this woman—this priestess of a false faith, if she be so still—brought you in the past? Once in another life, or so I understand your story, you were sworn to a certain Nature-goddess who was named Isis, were you not, and to her alone? Then a woman tempted you, and you fled with her afar. And there what found you? The betrayed and avenging goddess who slew you, or if not the goddess, one who had drunk of her wisdom and was the minister of her vengeance. Having that wisdom, this minister—woman or evil spirit—refused to die because she had learned to love you, but waited knowing that in your next life she would find you again, as indeed she would have done more swiftly in Devachan had she died without living on alone in so much misery. And she found you, and she died, or seemed to die, and now she is re-born, as she must

be, and doubtless you will meet once more, and again there must be misery. Oh, my friends, go not across the mountains; bide here with me and lament your sins!"

"Nay," answered Leo, "we are sworn to a tryst, and we do not break our word."

"Then, brethren, go keep your tryst; and when you have reaped its harvest, think upon my sayings, for I am sure that the wine you crush from the vintage of your desire will run red like blood, and that in its drinking you will find neither forgetfulness nor peace. Made blind by a passion of which well I know the sting and power, you seek to add a fair-faced evil to your lives, thinking that from this unity there shall be born all knowledge and great joy.

"Rather should you desire to live alone in holiness until at length your separate lives are merged and lost in the Good Unspeakable, the eternal bliss that lies in the last Nothingness. Ah! you do not believe me now; you shake your heads and smile; yet a day will come, it may be after many incarnations, when you will bow them in the dust and weep, saying to me: 'Brother Kou-en, yours were the words of wisdom, ours the deeds of foolishness'"; and with a deep sigh the old man turned and left us.

"A cheerful faith, truly," said Leo, looking after him, "to dwell through æons in monotonous misery in order that consciousness may be swallowed up at last in some void and formless abstraction called the 'Utter Peace.' I would rather take my share of a bad world and keep my hope of a better. Also I do not think that he knows anything of Ayesha and her destiny."

"So would I," I answered, "though perhaps he is right, after all. Who can tell? Moreover, what is the use of reasoning? Leo, we have no choice; we follow our fate. To what that fate may lead us we shall learn in due season."

Then we went to rest, for it was late, though I found little sleep that night. The warnings of the ancient abbot, good and learned man as he was, full also of ripe experience and of the foresighted wisdom that is given to such as he, oppressed me deeply. He promised us sorrow and bloodshed beyond the mountains, ending in death and re-births full of misery. Well, it might be so, but no approaching sufferings could stay our feet. And even if they could, they should not, since to see her face again I was ready to brave them all. And if this was my case, what must be that of Leo?"

A strange theory that of Kou-en's, that Ayesha was the goddess in old Egypt to whom Kallikrates was priest, or at the least her representative. That the princess Amenartas, with whom he fled, seduced him from the goddess to whom he was sworn. That this goddess incarnate in Ayesha—or using the woman Ayesha and her passions as her instruments—was avenged upon them both at Kôr, and that there in an after age the bolt she shot fell back upon her own head.

Well, I had often thought as much myself. Only I was sure that *She* herself could be no actual divinity, though she might be a manifestation of one, a priestess, a messenger, charged to work its will, to avenge or to reward, and yet, herself a human soul, with hopes and passions to be satisfied, and a destiny to fulfil. In truth, writing now when all is past and done with, I find much to confirm me in, and little to turn me from that theory, since life and powers of a quality which are more than human do not alone suffice to make a soul divine. On the other hand, however, it must be borne in mind that on one occasion, at any rate, Ayesha did undoubtedly suggest that in the beginning she was "a daughter of Heaven," and that there were others, notably the old Shaman Simbri, who seemed to take it for granted that her origin was supernatural. But of all these things I hope to speak in their season.

Meanwhile what lay beyond the mountains? Should we find her there who held the sceptre and upon earth wielded the power of the outraged Isis, and with her, that other woman who wrought the wrong? And if so, would the dread, inhuman struggle reach its climax around the person of the sinful priest? In a few months, a few days even, we might begin to know.

Thrilled by this thought, at length I fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AVALANCHE.

On the morning of the second day from that night, the sunrise found us already on our path across the desert. There, nearly a mile behind us, we could see the ruined statue of Buddha seated in front of the ancient monastery, and in that clear atmosphere could even distinguish the bent form of our friend, the old abbot, Kou-en, leaning against it until we were quite lost to sight. All the monks had wept when we parted from them, and Kou-en even more bitterly than the rest, for he had learned to love us.

"It was the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself."

"I am grieved," he said, "much grieved, which, indeed, I should not be, for such emotion partakes of sin. Yet I find comfort, for I know well that although I must soon leave this present life, yet we shall meet again in many future incarnations, and after you have put away these follies, together tread the path to Perfect Peace. Now take with you my blessings and my prayers, and begone, forgetting not that should you live to return"—and he shook his head doubtfully—"here you will be ever welcome."

So we embraced him and went sorrowfully.

It will be remembered that when the mysterious light fell upon us on the peak, I had my compass with me and was able roughly to take its bearings. For lack of any better guide we now followed these bearings, travelling almost due north-east, for in that direction had shone the fire. All day in the most beautiful weather we marched across the flower-strewn desert, seeing nothing except bunches of game and one or two herds of wild asses which had come down from the mountains to feed upon the new grass. As evening approached, we shot an antelope and made our camp—for we had brought the yak and a tent with us—among some tamarisk scrub, of which the dry stems furnished us with fuel. Nor did we lack for water, since by scraping in the sand soaked with melted snow, we found plenty of fair quality. So that night we supped in luxury upon tea and antelope meat, which, indeed, we were glad to have, as it spared our little store of dried provisions.

The next morning we ascertained our position as well as we could, and estimated that we had crossed about a quarter of the desert, a guess which proved very accurate, for on the evening of the fourth day of our journey we reached the bottom slopes of the opposing mountains, without having experienced either accident or fatigue. As Leo said, things were "going like clockwork," but I reminded him that a good start often meant a bad finish. Nor was I wrong, for now came our hardships. To begin with, the mountains proved to be exceeding high: it took us two days to climb their lower slopes. Also the heat of the sun had softened the snow, which made walking through it laborious, whilst, accustomed though we were to such conditions through long years of travelling, its continual glitter affected our eyes.

The morning of the seventh day found us in the mouth of a defile which wound away into the heart of the mountains. As it seemed the only possible path, we followed it, and were much cheered to discover that here must once have run a road. Not that we could see any road, indeed, for everything was buried in snow. But that one lay beneath our feet we were certain, since, although we marched along the edge of precipices, our path, however steep, was always flat; moreover, the rock upon one side of it had often been scarped by the hand of man. Of this there could be no doubt, for as the snow did not cling here, we saw the tool marks upon its bare surface.

Also we came to several places where galleries had been built out from the mountain-side, by means of beams let into it, as is still a common practice in Thibet. These beams, of course, had long since rotted away, leaving a gulf between us and the continuation of the path. When we met with such gaps, we were forced to go back and make a detour round or over some mountain; but although much delayed thereby, as it happened, we always managed to regain the road, if not without difficulty and danger.

What tried us more—for here our skill and experience as mountaineers could not help us—was the cold at night, obliged as we were to camp in the severe frost at a great altitude, and to endure through the long hours of darkness penetrating and icy winds, which soughed ceaselessly down the pass.

At length, on the tenth day, we reached the end of the defile, and as night was falling, camped there in the most bitter cold. Those were miserable hours, for now we had no fuel with which to boil water, and must satisfy our thirst by eating frozen snow, while our eyes smarted so sorely that we could not sleep, and notwithstanding all our wraps and the warmth that we gathered from the yak in the little tent, the cold caused our teeth to chatter like castanets.

The dawn came, and, after it, the sunrise. We crept from the tent and, leaving it standing awhile, dragged our stiffened limbs a hundred yards or so to a spot where the defile took a turn, in order that we might thaw in the rays of the sun, which at that hour could not reach us where we had camped.

Leo was round it first, and I heard him utter an exclamation. In a few seconds I reached his side, and lo! before us lay our Promised Land.

Far beneath us, ten thousand feet at least—for it must be remembered that we viewed

it from the top of a mountain—it stretched away and away till its distances met the horizon. In character it was quite flat, an alluvial plain that probably, in some primeval age, had been the bottom of one of the vast lakes of which a number exist in Central Asia, most of them now in process of desiccation. One object only relieved this dreary flatness—a single, snow-clad, and gigantic mountain, of which even at that distance—for it was very far from us—we could clearly see the outline. Indeed, we could see more, for from its rounded crest rose a great plume of smoke, showing that it was an active volcano, and on the hither lip of the crater an enormous pillar of rock, whereof the top was formed to the shape of a loop.

Yes, there it stood before us, that symbol of our vision which we had sought these many years, and at the sight of it our hearts beat fast and our breath came quickly. We noted at once that although we had not seen it during our passage of the mountains, since the peaks ahead and the rocky sides of the defile hid it from view, so great was its height that it overtopped the tallest of them. This made it clear to us how it came to be possible that the ray of light passing through the loop could fall upon the highest snows of that towering pinnacle which we had climbed upon the further side of the desert.

Also now we were certain of the cause of that ray, for the smoke behind the loop explained this mystery. Doubtless, at times when the volcano was awake, that smoke must be replaced by flame, emitting light of fearful intensity, and this light it was that reached us, concentrated and directed by the loop.

For the rest, we thought that about thirty miles away we could make out a white-roofed town set upon a mound, situated among trees upon the banks of a wide river which flowed across the plain. Also it was evident that this country had a large population who cultivated the soil, for by the aid of a pair of field-glasses, one of our few remaining and most cherished possessions, we could see the green of springing crops pierced by irrigation canals and the lines of trees that marked the limits of the fields.

Yes, there before us stretched the Promised Land, and there rose the mystic Mount, so that all we had to do was to march down the snow-slopes and enter it where we would.

Thus we thought in our folly, little guessing what lay before us, what terrors and weary suffering we must endure before we stood at length beneath the shadow of the Symbol of Life.

Our fatigues forgotten, we returned to the tent, hastily swallowed some of our dried food, which we washed down with lumps of snow that gave us toothache and chilled us inside, but which thirst compelled us to eat, dragged the poor yak to its feet, loaded it up, and started.

All this while, so great was our haste and so occupied was each of us with his own thoughts, that, if my memory serves me, we scarcely interchanged a word. Down the snow-slopes we marched swiftly and without hesitation, for here the road was marked for us by means of pillars of rock set opposite to each other at intervals. These pillars we observed with satisfaction, for they told us that we were still upon a highway which led to the Promised Land.

Yet, as we could not help noting, it was one which seemed to have gone out of use, since with the exception of a few wild-sheep tracks and the spoor of some bears and mountain foxes, not a single sign of beast or man could we discover. This, however, was to be explained, we reflected, by the fact that doubtless the road was only used in the summer season. Or perhaps the inhabitants of the country were now stay-at-home people who never travelled it at all.

Those slopes were longer than we thought; indeed, when darkness closed in we had not reached the foot of them. So we were obliged to spend another night in the snow, pitching our tent in the shelter of an overhanging rock. As we had descended many thousand feet, the temperature proved, fortunately, a little milder; indeed, I do not think that there were more than eighteen or twenty degrees of frost that night. Also here and there the heat of the sun had melted the snow in secluded places, so that we were able to find water to drink, while the yak could fill its poor old stomach with dead-looking mountain mosses, which it seemed to think better than nothing.

Again the still dawn came, throwing its red garment over the lonesome, endless mountains, and we dragged ourselves to our numbed feet, ate some of our remaining food, and started onwards. Now we could no longer see the country beneath, for it and even the towering volcano were hidden from us by an intervening ridge that seemed to be pierced by a single narrow gully, towards which we headed. Indeed, as the pillars showed us, thither ran the buried road. By midday it

"'Why dash yourselves against a rock?'"

appeared quite close to us, and we tramped on in feverish haste. As it chanced, however, there was no need to hurry, for an hour later we learned the truth.

Between us and the mouth of the gully rose—or, rather, sank—a sheer precipice that was apparently three or four hundred feet in depth, and at its foot we could hear the sound of water.

Right to the edge of this precipice ran the path, for one of the stone pillars stood upon its extreme brink; and yet how could a road descend such a place as that? We stared aghast: then a possible solution occurred to us.

"Don't you see," said Leo, with a hollow laugh, "the gulf has opened since this track was used? Volcanic action probably."

"Perhaps, or perhaps there was a wooden bridge or stairway which has rotted. It does not matter. We must find another path, that is all," I answered as cheerfully as I could.

"Yes, and soon," he said, "if we do not wish to stop here for ever."

So we turned to the right and marched along the edge of the precipice till, a mile or so away, we came to a small glacier, of which the surface was sprinkled with large stones frozen into its substance. This glacier hung down the face of the cliff like a petrified waterfall, but whether or no it reached the foot we could not discover. At any rate, to think of attempting its descent seemed out of the question. From this point onwards we could see that the precipice increased in depth, and far as the eye could reach was absolutely sheer.

So we went back again and searched to the left of our road. Here the mountains receded, so that above us was a mighty, dazzling slope of snow, and below us that same pitiless, unclimbable gulf. As the light began to fade, we perceived, half a mile or more in front, a bare-topped hillock of rock, which stood on the verge of the precipice, and hurried to it, thinking that from its crest we might be able to discover a way of descent.

When at length we had struggled to the top, it was about a hundred and fifty feet high; what we did discover was that, here also, as beyond the glacier, the gulf was infinitely deeper than at the spot where the road ended—so deep, indeed, that we could not see its bottom, although from it rose the sound of roaring water. Moreover, it was quite half a mile in width.

Whilst we stared round us, the sinking sun vanished behind a mountain and, the sky being heavy, the light went out like that of a candle. Now the ascent of this hillock had proved so steep, especially at one place, where we were obliged to climb a sort of rock ladder, that we scarcely cared to attempt to struggle down it again in that gloom. Therefore, remembering that there was little to choose between the top of this knoll and the snow plain at its foot in the matter of temperature or other conveniences, and being quite exhausted, we determined to spend the night upon it, thereby, as we were to learn, saving our lives.

Unloading the yak, we pitched our tent under the lee of the topmost knob of rock and ate a couple of handfuls of dried fish and corn-cake. This was the last of the food that we had brought with us from the Lamasery, and we reflected with dismay that unless we could shoot something, our commissariat was now represented by the carcass of our old friend the yak. Then we wrapped ourselves up in our thick rugs and fur garments and forgot our miseries in sleep.

It cannot have been long before daylight when we were awakened by a sudden and terrific sound like the boom of a great cannon, followed by thousands of other sounds which might be compared to the fusillade of musketry.

"Great Heaven! What is that?" I said.

We crawled from the tent, but as yet could see nothing, whilst the yak began to low in a terrified manner. But if we could not see, we could hear and feel. The booming and cracking had ceased, and was followed by a soft, grinding noise, the most sickening sound, I think, to which I ever listened. This was accompanied by a strange, steady, unnatural wind, which seemed to press upon us as water presses. Then the dawn broke and we saw.

The mountain-side was moving down upon us in a vast avalanche of snow!

Oh, what a sight was that! On from the crest of the precipitous slopes above, two miles and more away, it came, a living thing, rolling, sliding, gliding; piling itself in long, leaping waves, hollowing itself into cavernous valleys, like a tempest-driven sea, whilst above its surface hung a powdery cloud of frozen spray.

As we watched, clinging to each other terrified, the first of these waves struck our hill, causing the mighty mass of solid rock to quiver like a yacht beneath the impact of an ocean roller, or an aspen in a sudden rush of wind. It struck and slowly separated, then with a majestic motion flowed like water over the edge of a precipice on either side, and fell with a thudding sound into the unmeasured depths beneath. And this was but a little thing, a mere forerunner, for after it, with a slow, serpentine movement, rolled the body of the avalanche.

It came in combers, it came in level floods. It piled itself against our hill—yes, to within fifty feet of the head of it—till we thought that even that rooted rock must be torn from its foundations and hurled like a pebble to the deeps beneath. And the turmoil of it all! The screaming of the blast caused by the compression of the air, the dull, continuous thudding of the fall of millions of tons of snow as they rushed through space and ended their journey in the gulf!

Nor was this the worst of it, for as the deep snows above thinned, great boulders that had been buried beneath them, perhaps for centuries, were loosened from their resting-places and began to thunder down the hill. At first they moved slowly, throwing up the hard snow around them as the prow

of a ship throws foam. Then gathering momentum, they sprang into the air with leaps such as those of shells ricocheting upon water, till in the end, singing and hurtling, many of them rushed past and even over us, to vanish far beyond. Some, indeed, struck our little mountain with the force of shot fired from the great guns of a battleship, and shattered there, or, if they fell upon its side, tore away tons of rock and passed with them into the chasm like a meteor surrounded by its satellites. Indeed, no bombardment devised and directed by man could have been half so terrible or, had there been anything to destroy, half so destructive.

The scene was appalling in its unchained and resistless might evolved suddenly from the completest calm. There in the lap of the quiet mountains, looked down upon by the peaceful, tender sky, the powers hidden in the breast of Nature were suddenly set free, and, companioned by whirlwinds and all the terrifying majesty of sound, loosed upon the heads of us two human atoms.

At the first rush of snow we had leapt back behind our protecting peak and, lying at full length upon the ground, gripped it and clung there, fearing lest the wind should whirl us to the abyss. Long ago our tent had gone like a dead leaf in an autumn gale, and at times it seemed as if we must follow.

The boulders hurtled over and past us; one of them fell full upon the little peak, shattering its crest and bursting into fragments, which fled away, each singing its own wild song. We were not touched, but when we looked behind us, it was to see the yak, which had risen in its terror, lying dead and headless. Then in our fear we lay still, waiting for the end, and wondering dimly whether we should be buried in the surging snow or swept away with the hill, or crushed by the flying rocks, or lifted and lost in the hurricane.

How long did it last? We never knew. It may have been ten minutes or two hours, for in such a scene time loses its proportions. Only we became aware that the wind had fallen, while the noise of grinding snow and hurtling boulders ceased. Very cautiously we gained our feet and looked.

In front of us the sheer mountain-side, for a depth of over two miles, by the width of about a thousand yards, which had been covered with many feet of snow, was now bare rock. Piled up against the face of our hill, almost to its summit, lay a tongue of snow, pressed to the consistency of ice and spotted with boulders that had lodged there. The peak itself was torn and shattered, so that it revealed great gleaming surfaces and pits, in which glittered mica or some other mineral. The vast gulf behind was half filled with the avalanche and its *débris*. But for the rest, it seemed as though nothing had happened, for the sun shone sweetly overhead, and the solemn snows reflected back its rays from the sides of a hundred hills. And we had endured it all and were still alive; yes, and unhurt.

But what a position was ours! We dared not attempt to descend the mount, lest we should sink into the loose snow and be buried there. Moreover, all along the breadth of the path of the avalanche, boulders from time to time still thundered down the rocky slope, and with them came patches of snow that had been left behind by the big slide, small in themselves, it is true, but each of them large enough to kill a hundred men. It was obvious, therefore, that until these conditions changed, or death released us, we must abide where we were upon the crest of the hillock.

So there we sat, foodless and frightened, wondering what our old friend Kou-en would say if he could see us now. By degrees hunger mastered all our other sensations, and we began to turn longing eyes upon the headless body of the yak.

"Let's skin him," said Leo; "it will be something to do, and we shall want his hide to-night."

So with affection, and even reverence, we performed this office for the dead companion of our journeyings, rejoicing the while that it was not we who had brought him to his end. Indeed, long residence among peoples who believed fully that the souls of men could pass into, or were risen from, the bodies of animals, had made us a little superstitious on this matter. It would be scarcely pleasant, we reflected, in some future incarnation to find our faithful friend clad in human form and to hear him bitterly reproach us for his murder.

Being dead, however, these arguments did not apply to eating him, as we were sure he would himself acknowledge. So we cut off little bits of his flesh and, rolling them in snow till they looked as though they were nicely floured, hunger compelling us, swallowed them at a gulp. It was a disgusting meal, and we felt like cannibals; but what could we do?

"On the morning of the second day, the sunrise found us already on our path across the desert."

CHAPTER V.

THE GLACIER.

EVEN that day came to an end at last, and after a few more lumps of yak, our tent being gone, we drew his hide over us and rested as best we could, knowing that at least we had no more avalanches to fear. That night it froze sharply, so that had it not been for the yak's hide and the other rugs and garments, which fortunately we were wearing when the snow-slide began, it would, I think, have gone hard with us. As it was, we suffered a great deal.

"Horace," said Leo at the dawn, "I am going to leave this. If we have to die, I would rather do so moving; but I don't believe that we shall die."

"Very well," I said, "let us start. If the snow won't bear us now, it never will."

So we tied up our rugs and the yak's hide in two bundles and, having cut off some more of the frozen meat, began our descent. Now, although the mount was under two hundred feet high, its base, fortunately for us -for otherwise it must have been swept away by the mighty pressure of the avalanche —was broad, so that there was a long expanse of piled-up snow between us and the level ground.

Since, owing to the overhanging conformation of the place, it was quite impossible for us to descend in front, where pressure had made the snow hard as stone, we were obliged to risk a march over the looser material upon its flank. As there was nothing to be gained by waiting, off we went, Leo leading and, step by step, trying the snow. To our joy we discovered that the sharp night frost had so hardened its surface that it would bear us. About half way down, however, where the pressure had been less, it became much softer, so that we were forced to lie upon our faces, which enabled us to distribute our weight over a larger surface, and thus slither gently down the hill.

All went well until we were within twenty paces of the bottom, where we must cross a soft mound formed of the powdery dust thrown off by the avalanche in its rush. Leo slipped over safely, but I, following a yard or two to his right, of a sudden felt the hard crust yield beneath me. An ill-judged but quite natural flounder and wriggle, such as a newly landed flat-fish gives upon the sand, completed the mischief, and with one piercing but swiftly stifled yell, I vanished.

Anyone who has ever sunk in deep water will know that the sensation is not pleasant, but I can assure him that to go through the same experience in soft snow is infinitely worse; mud alone could surpass its terrors. Down I went, and down, till at length I seemed to reach a rock which alone saved me from disappearing for ever. Now I felt the snow closing above me, and with it came darkness and a sense of suffocation. So soft was the drift, however, that before I was overcome I contrived with my arms to thrust away the powdery dust from about my head, thus forming a little hollow into which air filtered slowly. Getting my hands upon the stone, I strove to rise, but could not, the weight upon me was too great.

Then I abandoned hope and prepared to die. The process proved not altogether unpleasant. I did not see visions from my past life, as drowning men are supposed to do, but —and this shows how strong was her empire over me—my mind flew back to Ayesha. I seemed to behold her and a man at her side, standing over me in some dark, rocky gulf. She was wrapped in a long travelling cloak, and her lovely eyes were wild with fear. I rose to salute her and make report, but she cried in a fierce, concentrated voice—

"What evil thing has happened here? Thou livest; then where is my lord Leo? Speak, man, and say where thou hast hid my lord—or die."

The vision was extraordinarily real and vivid, I remember, and, considered in connection with a certain subsequent event, in all ways most remarkable, but it passed as swiftly as it came.

Then my senses left me.

I saw light again. I heard a voice, that of Leo! "Horace!" he cried, "Horace, hold fast to the stock of the rifle!" Something was thrust against my outstretched hand. I gripped it despairingly, and there came a strain. It was useless, I did not move. Then, bethinking me, I drew up my legs and, by chance or the mercy of Heaven, I know not, got my feet against a ridge of the rock on which I was lying. Again I felt the strain and thrust with all my might. Of a sudden the snow gave, and out of that hole I shot like a fox from its earth.

I struck something. It was Leo straining at the gun, and I knocked him backwards. Then down the slope we rolled, landing at length upon the very edge of the precipice. I sat up, drawing in the air with great gasps, and oh! how sweet it was. My eyes fell upon my hand, and I saw that the veins stood out on the back of it, black as ink and

large as cords. Clearly I must have been near my end.

"How long was I in there?" I gasped to Leo, who sat at my side, wiping off the sweat that ran from his face in streams.

"Don't know. Nearly twenty minutes, I should think."

"Twenty minutes! It seemed like twenty centuries. How did you get me out? You could not stand upon the drift dust."

"No. I lay upon the yak skin where the snow was harder, and tunnelled towards you through the powdery stuff with my hands, for I knew where you had sunk, and it was not far off. At last I saw your finger-tips; they were so blue that for a few seconds I took them for rock, and thrust the butt of the rifle against them. Luckily you still had life enough to catch hold of it, and you know the rest. Were we not both very strong, it could never have been done."

"Thank you, old fellow," I said simply.

"Why should you thank me?" he asked, with one of his quick smiles. "Do you suppose that I wish to continue this journey alone? Come, if you have got your breath, let us be getting on. You have been sleeping in a cold bed and want exercise. Look, my rifle is broken, and yours is lost in the snow. Well, it will save us the trouble of carrying the cartridges," and he laughed drearily.

Then we began our march, heading for the spot where the road ended four miles or so away, for to go forward seemed useless. In due course we reached it safely. Once a mass of snow as large as a church swept down just in front of us, and once a great boulder loosened from the mountain rushed at us suddenly like an attacking lion, or the stones thrown by Polyphemus at the ship of Odysseus, and, leaping over our heads, vanished with an angry scream into the depths beneath. But we took little heed of these things: our nerves were deadened, and no danger seemed to affect them.

There was the end of the road, and there were our own footprints and the impress of the yak's hoofs in the snow. The sight of them affected me, for it seemed strange that we should have lived to look upon them again. We stared over the edge of the precipice. Yes, it was sheer and absolutely unclimbable.

"Come to the glacier," said Leo.

So we went on to it and, scrambling a little way down its root, made an examination. Here, so far as we could judge, the cliff was about four hundred feet deep. But whether or no the tongue of ice reached to the foot of it, we were unable to tell, since about two-thirds of the way down it arched inwards, like the end of a bent bow, and the conformation of the overhanging rocks on either side was such that we could not see where it terminated. We climbed back again and sat down, and despair took hold of us—bitter, black despair.

"What are we to do?" I asked. "In front of us death. Behind us death, for how can we recross those mountains without food, or guns to shoot it with? Here death, for we must sit and starve. We have striven and failed. Leo, our end is at hand. Only a miracle can save us."

"A miracle," he answered. "Well, what was it that led us to the top of the mount, so that we were able to escape the avalanche? And what was it which put that rock in your way as you sank into the bed of dust, and gave me wit and strength to dig you out of your grave of snow? And what is it that has preserved us through seventeen years of dangers such as few men have known and lived? Some directing Power. Some Destiny that will accomplish itself in us. Why should the Power cease to guide? Why should the Destiny be baulked at last?"

He paused, then added fiercely: "I tell you, Horace, that even if we had guns, food, and yaks, I would not turn back upon our spoor, since to do so would prove me a coward and unworthy of her. I will go on."

"How?" I asked.

"By that road," and he pointed to the glacier.

"It is a road to death!"

"Well, if so, Horace, it would seem that in this land men find life in death, or so they believe. If we die now, we shall die travelling our path, and in the country where we perish we may be born again. At least I am determined, so you must choose."

"I have chosen long ago. Leo, we began this journey together, and we will end it together. Perhaps Ayesha knows and will help us," and I laughed drearily. "If not—come, we are wasting time."

Then we took counsel, and the end of it was that we cut a skin rug and the yak's tough hide into strips and knotted these together into two serviceable ropes, which we fastened about our middles, leaving one end loose, for we thought that they might help us in our descent.

Next we bound fragments of another skin rug about our legs and knees, to protect them from the chafing of the ice and rocks, and for the same reason put on our thick leather gloves. This done, we took the

remainder of our gear and heavy robes and, having placed stones in them, threw them over the brink of the precipice, trusting to find them again should we ever reach its foot. Now our preparations were complete, and it was time for us to start upon perhaps one of the most desperate journeys ever undertaken by men of their own will.

Yet we stayed a little, looking at each other in a piteous fashion, for we could not speak. Only we embraced, and I confess I think I wept a little. It all seemed so sad and hopeless, these longings endured through many years, these perpetual, weary travellings, and now—the end. I could not bear to think of that splendid man, my ward, my most dear friend, the companion of my life, who stood before me so full of beauty and of vigour, but who must within a few short minutes be turned into a heap of quivering, mangled flesh. For myself, it did not matter. I was old, it was time that I should die. I had lived innocently, if it were innocent to follow this lovely image, this Siren of the caves, who lured us on to doom.

No, I don't think that I thought of myself then, but I thought a great deal of Leo, and when I saw his determined face and flashing eyesas he nerved himself to the last endeavour, I was proud of him. So in broken accents I blessed him and wished him well through all the æons, praying that I might be his companion to the end of time. In few words and short he thanked me and gave me back my blessing. Then he muttered—

"Come."

So side by side we began the terrible descent. At first it was easy enough, although a slip would have hurled us to eternity. But we were strong and skilful, accustomed to such places moreover, and made none. About a quarter of the way down we paused, standing upon a great boulder that was embedded in the ice, and, turning round cautiously, leaned our backs against the glacier and looked about us. Truly it was a horrible place, almost sheer, nor did we learn much, for beneath us, a hundred and twenty feet or more, the projecting bend cut off our view of what lay below.

So, feeling that our nerves would not bear a prolonged contemplation of that dizzy gulf, once more we set our faces to the ice and proceeded on the downward climb. Now matters were more difficult, for the stones were fewer, and once or twice we must slide to reach them, not knowing if we should ever stop again. But the ropes which we threw over the angles of the rocks or salient points of ice, letting ourselves down by their help and drawing them after us when we reached the next foothold, saved us from disaster.

Thus at length we came to the bend, which was more than half way down the precipice, being, so far as I could judge, about two hundred and fifty feet from its lip, and say one hundred and fifty from the darksome bottom of the narrow gulf. Here were no stones, but only some rough ice, on which we sat to rest.

"We must look," said Leo presently.

But the question was, how to do this. Indeed, there was only one way—to hang over the bend and discover what lay below. We read each other's thought without the need of words, and I made a motion as though I would start.

"No," said Leo, "I am younger and stronger than you. Come, help me," and he began to fasten the end of his rope to a strong, projecting point of ice. "Now," he said, "hold my ankles."

It seemed an insanity, but there was nothing else to be done, so, fixing my heels in a niche, I grasped them, and slowly he slid forward till his body vanished to the middle. What he saw does not matter, for I saw it all afterwards, but what happened was that suddenly all his great weight came upon my arms with such a jerk that his ankles were torn from my grip!

Or, Heaven knows! perhaps in my terror I loosed them, obeying the natural impulse which prompts a man to save his own life. If so, may I be forgiven; but had I held on, I must have been jerked into the abyss. Then the rope ran out and remained taut.

"Leo!" I screamed, "Leo!" and I heard a muffled voice saying, as I thought: "Come!" What it really said was: "Don't come!" But, indeed—and may it go to my credit—I did not pause to think, but face outwards, just as I was sitting, began to slide and scramble down the ice.

In two seconds I had reached the curve, in three I was over it. Beneath was what I can only describe as a great icicle broken off short, and separated from the cliff by about four yards of space. This icicle was not more than fifteen feet in length, and sloped outwards, so that my descent was not sheer. Moreover, at the end of it the trickling of water, or some such accident, had worn away the ice, leaving a little ledge as broad, perhaps, as a man's hand. There were roughnesses on the surface below the curve, upon which my clothing caught, also I gripped them desperately with my fingers. Thus it

"He was hacking at the cord with it fiercely."

came about that I slid down quite gently and, my heels landing upon the little ledge, remained almost upright, with outstretched arms—like a person crucified to a cross of ice.

Then I saw everything, and the sight curdled the blood within my veins. Hanging to the rope, four or five feet below the broken point, was Leo, out of reach of it, and out of reach of the cliff, as he hung turning slowly round and round, much as—for in a dreadful, inconsequent fashion the absurd similarity struck me even then—a joint turns before the fire. Below yawned the black gulf, and at the bottom of it, far, far beneath, appeared a faint, white sheet of snow. That is what I saw.

Think of it! Think of it! I crucified upon the ice, my heels resting upon a little ledge; my fingers grasping excrescences on which a bird could scarcely have found a foothold; round and below me dizzy space. To climb back whence I came was impossible, to stir even was impossible, since one slip and I must be gone.

And below me, hung like a spider to its cord, Leo turning slowly round and round!

I could see that rope of green hide stretch beneath his weight, and the double knots in it slip and tighten, and I remember wondering which would give first, the hide or the knots, or whether it would hold till he dropped from the noose limb by limb.

Oh! I have been in many a perilous place—I who sprang from the Swaying Stone to the point of the Trembling Spur, and missed my aim—but never, never in such a one as this. Agony took hold of me; a cold sweat burst from every pore. I could feel it running down my face like tears; my hair bristled upon my head. And below, in utter silence, Leo turned round and round; and each time he turned, his upcast eyes met mine with a look that was horrible to see.

The silence was the worst of it, the silence and the helplessness. If he had cried out, if he had struggled, it would have been better. But to know that he was alive there, with every nerve and perception at its utmost stretch!

My limbs began to ache, and yet I dared not stir a muscle. They ached horribly, or so I thought, and beneath this torture, mental and physical, my mind gave. I remembered things: remembered how, as a child, I had climbed a tree and reached a place whence I could move neither up nor down, and what I suffered then. Remembered how once in Egypt a foolhardy friend of mine had ascended the Second Pyramid alone, and become thus crucified upon its shining cap, where he remained for a whole half-hour, with four hundred feet of space beneath him. I could see him now, stretching his stockinged foot downwards in a vain attempt to reach the next crack, and drawing it back again; could see his tortured face, a white blot upon the red granite.

Then that face vanished, and blackness gathered round me, and in the blackness visions: of the living, restless avalanche, of the snow-grave into which I had sunk—oh! years and years ago; of Ayesha demanding Leo's life at my hands. Blackness and silence, through which I could only hear the cracking of my muscles.

* * * * *

Suddenly in the blackness a flash, and in the silence a sound. The flash was the flash of a knife which Leo had drawn. He was hacking at the cord with it fiercely, fiercely, to make an end. And the sound was that of the noise he made, a ghastly noise, half shout of defiance and half yell of terror, as at the third stroke it parted.

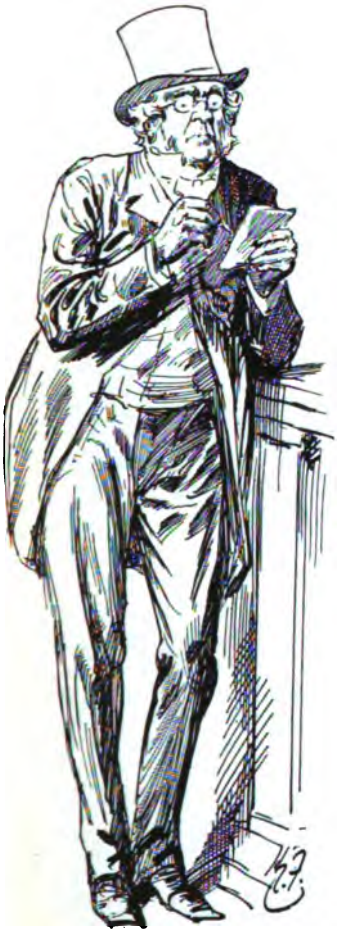
I saw it part. The tough hide was half cut through, and its severed portion curled upwards and downwards like the upper and lower lips of an angry dog, whilst that which was unsevered stretched out slowly, slowly, till it grew quite thin. Then it snapped, so that the rope flew upwards and struck me across the face like the blow of a whip.

Another instant and I heard a crackling, thudding sound. Leo had struck the ground below. Leo was dead, a mangled mass of flesh and bone as I had pictured him. I could not bear it. My nerve and human dignity came back. I would not wait until, my strength exhausted, I slid from my perch as a wounded bird falls from a tree. No, I would follow him at once, of my own act.

I let my arms fall against my sides, and rejoiced in the relief from pain that the movement gave me. Then, balanced upon my heels, I stood upright, took my last look at the sky, muttered my last prayer. For an instant I remained thus poised.

Shouting: "I come!" I raised my hands above my head and dived as a bather dives, dived into the black gulf beneath.

(To be continued.)



W. M. THACKERAY.

SOME GREAT WORKERS AND THEIR METHODS.

RECALLED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
HARRY FURNISS.

THERE is a popular idea that poets and novelists, musicians and artists work in a sort of fairyland of their own, where the roses, the honeysuckle, and the bee welcome the genius as he opens his study window: where the scent from the new-mown hay acts as a tonic to the jaded brain, and where the railway whistle is unknown: where, in his country rambles, primroses and violets, regardless of the season, cast up their incense as an offering to talent when the dreamer, treading the mossy country lane, crushes them under his feet; where all is peace and sunlight and sweet scents, every flower yielding a fragrance and a redolence which makes Nature one's truest friend for life.

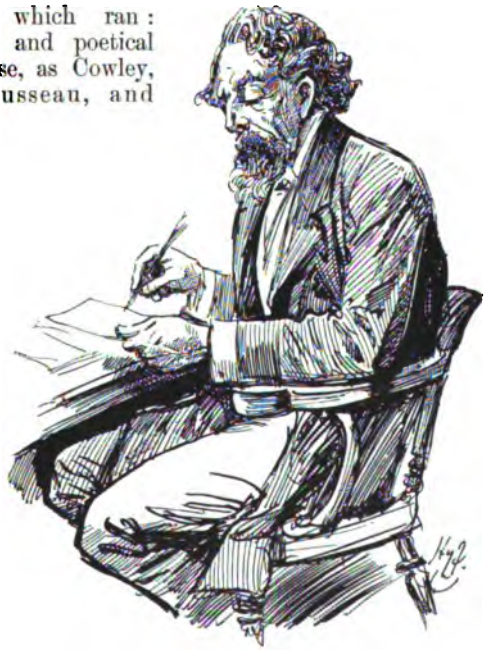
> The Poet haunts these: Youth that ne'er grows old
> Dwells with her and her flowers; and Beauty sleeps
> In her most green recesses.

Yet, strange to relate, there are authors flourishing in London flats, youths that seem ever green; and Beauty sleeps in a newly painted iron bedstead; artists paint in a London fog, and poets write sonnets in the "Tuppenny Tube."

In my youth I came across a paragraph which ran: "Many poets and poetical writers of prose, as Cowley, Cowper, Rousseau, and Wordsworth, have felt a delight in solitude, from their feelings not being so much exposed to those jarring discrepancies of society which tend to lower our ideas of human nature." Yet since I have lived among workers quite as great—in their own estimation, at least—as these, I have not noticed the literary giants of our time shrink by reason of contamination from mentally smaller, everyday, mere men of the world.

It may, perhaps, interest the man in the street, or in the Tuppenny Tube (it is all the same thing figuratively, though not atmospherically), to know how these workers work.

Victor Hugo, had he lived and visited London in these days, might have written his masterpiece in the Tube; for although it was his habit to think out his work lying on his back on a yacht at sea (much as Mr. W. S. Gilbert works in his easy-chair in his study at Harrow Weald), far from the



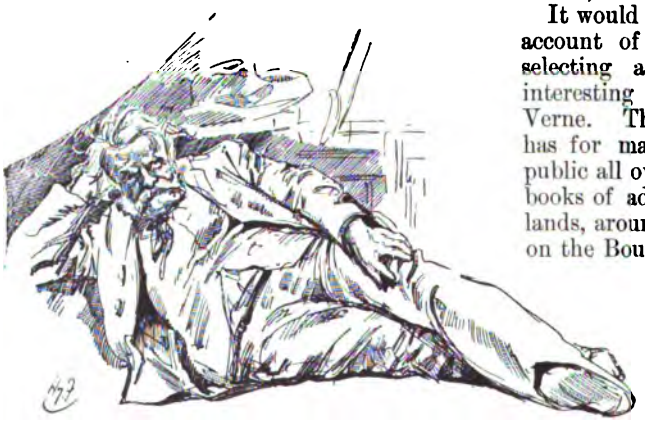
CHARLES DICKENS.

madding crowd, once he had his new creation well in his head, the rest was purely mechanical; he could write it off anywhere, even in a crowded roomful of chattering friends. Yet Hugo was as great as, if not greater than, Cowley, Cowper, Rousseau, or Wordsworth. Swinburne has written of him:

Sun, that hast not seen a loftier head wax hoary,
Earth, which has not shown the sun a nobler birth,
Time, that hast not on thy scroll defiled and gory
One man's name writ brighter in its whole wide girth,
Witness, till the final years fulfil their story,
Till the stars break off the music of their mirth,
What among the sons of men was this man's glory,
What the vesture of his soul revealed on earth.

On the other hand, Charles Dickens wrote in his study, in solitude, for a stated time every day. Thackeray carried his MS., written on blue paper, about with him, and whenever he had a minute to spare—for instance, waiting for a cheque to be cashed at his bankers—out would come the MS., and, if necessary, some corrections would be made. Lord Lytton dressed for the occasion and wrote in his splendid library, with twelve candles burning and two powdered footmen in attendance. The author of "Quo Vadis" collects a mass of books of reference around him, shuts himself up, and then writes. These items which I have come across from time to time, either in conversation or in books, may or may not be correct.

Charles Dickens sought his subjects, and found inspiration, in crowded Cockaigne; he



VICTOR HUGO.

also, according to Mrs. E. M. Ward, found mental relief in long walks—in fact, this lady, who knew Charles Dickens, gives it as her opinion that the daily walks Dickens indulged in "were nothing less than a form of nervousness—his method of suppressing, by bodily fatigue, the constant mental excitement to which he was subjected."

Mr. Burnett, giving his impression of Dickens's mode of work, states that: "His habit, for a limited time, was to retire to his study after supper—about ten o'clock—and

GUSTAVE DORÉ.

work on till one, as a rule; but now and then the rule would be forgotten through the interest taken by him in his work, when the study door would remain locked on the wrong side for his bed until two, and sometimes three o'clock in the morning, he feeling that the action of his mind—or the essence of it—was impeded in the daytime; that it could be brought with greater ease under control when silence reigned within and without, and there was freedom from noise, light, heat, distraction by a multitude of callers, and other hindrances.*

It would be impossible for me to give an account of every writer or artist, but in selecting a few I would include, as an interesting and imaginative writer, Jules Verne. That famous French genius who has for many years fascinated the reading public all over the world by his imaginative books of adventure under the sea, over the lands, around the world, into the moon, lived on the Boulevard Longueville, at Amiens, at the corner of the Rue Charles Dubois. Mr. R. H. Sherard, who visited the master "Jules Verne—*the* Jules Verne, your Jules Verne and mine, who has delighted us all the world over for so many years, and who will delight the world for generations and

* Miss Hogarth writes: "In reference to this paragraph, you must put it 'in very, very early days'; for within my memory (which dates from 1842) of his habits, he rarely wrote in the night. Occasionally, under some very great pressure of work, he would write for one night. He was most careful of his health in every way."

generations to come"—writes that M. Verne informed him as follows about his methods of work: "I rise every morning before five—a little later, perhaps, in the winter—and at five am at my desk, remaining at work till eleven. I work very slowly, and with the greatest care, writing and rewriting until each sentence takes the form that I desire.

"I have always at least ten novels in my head in advance, subjects and plots thought out; so that, you see, if I am spared, I shall have no difficulty in completing the eighty novels which I spoke of. But it is over my proofs that I spend most time. I am never satisfied with less than seven or eight proofs, and correct and correct again, until it may be safely said the last proof bears hardly any traces of the original manuscript."

The French are more eccentric workers than the English. Let me select a French artist, whose reputation is purely an English one—Gustave Doré. Some geniuses of the pen find inspiration in lying on the ground as does a seal on the shore. Apologising for

JULES VERNE.

the accidental pun, I may say the greatest of these was Shelley. He lay face downwards for hours at a stretch, with a tankard of light wine by his side, wooing the poetic muse. In this way he wrote. But what seems even more extraordinary is that some artists paint whilst lying in the same uncomfortable position. That genius of the pencil, Gustave Doré, drew all his wonderful illustrations to "Dante," "Don Quixote," and "Æsop's Fables" whilst lying on the ground, with the floor as his easel. Another artist who preferred the crocodile position for work was Albert Moore, the painter of those beautiful, decorative pictures, "Yellow Marguerites," "Pansies," "Garnets," "Shells," "Azaleas," "Pomegranates," "The Marble Seat," and many another. He had various models for the figures, but nearly all his heads were painted from Miss Nellie Ruddle,

HENRIK SIENKIEWICZ,
The Author of "Quo Vadis."

a model who sat for me at the same period—a period extending over several years. She frequently amused me by her descriptions of Moore's eccentricities. He lay on the floor, writhing over his studies—tubes of paints and brushes—a man of violent temper and strong opinions. To his strength in that direction, rather than to any weakness in his work, he owed his exclusion from Academy honours. Certainly two artists could not be more dissimilar in their methods of working than Albert Moore and myself. Moore, poetical, slow, frightfully serious, and dreadfully cross, lying on his stomach painting beautiful pictures. I, flippant, anything but slow, seldom in a bad temper—certainly never so in the presence of a pretty woman—standing, dancing about, juggling, drawing caricatures! It is evident to anyone looking over Moore's works that a curious point about them all is the low point of sight—the exaggeration of the lower limbs, and—as in the case of Doré—the sense of heaviness and weariness which affects the spectator.

Mrs. Gosse, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's sister-in-law, has, in the *Century Magazine*, thus described that eminent painter's method of work: "Much has been written about Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's work, but I am not aware that anyone has described the exact manner in which he proceeds. His first sketch for a picture is usually done slightly, and directly on the canvas or panel. The groups of figures are arranged and re-arranged until the artist's eye is satisfied that the whole composition hangs well together, and that the attention of the spectator is carried naturally along to the chief incident of the scene. All the sketching-in of the figures is done with the help

RUDYARD KIPLING.

of Nature. A thin oil-colour outline of some neutral colour is used for this; sometimes the figures are painted at once. The whole canvas is now filled in, rather as a piece of *cloisonné* might be with colour, so that the disturbing whiteness of the material is hidden. From this time forth hard work follows. If the picture contained elaborate architecture, he sometimes had a paper of the same size as his canvas stretched across a board, and the whole building, parts of which were to appear in the picture, drawn out carefully to scale by an assistant, with roof, sculptured columns, and elaborate tesselated pavement complete, untiring attention being paid to the perspective of the different parts. Unfortunately he had always to do it afresh, and therefore he has abandoned this plan, and now tries himself to work out his backgrounds on the picture itself so completely and thoroughly that an actual building might be constructed by following the plans for it. Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema paints his figures direct from life in every instance, elaborately draped and coiffured as they appear in his completed pictures."

One of the greatest artists England has ever produced, Fred Walker, is also one of the most difficult to describe. I never had the pleasure of knowing him, as he was "before my time," but like all artists, I worship at the shrine of his genius. Walker was originally intended for the profession of architect, but found himself a student in the Royal Academy in 1858. He actually started three schools of English art—a new school in water colour, a new school in oil, a new school in black-and-white—and since that time most of the artists in these three branches have been greatly influenced by the methods of this genius. His best paintings were "The Bathers," 1868, now hanging in the drawing-room of Sir Cuthbert Quilter, M.P., "The Vagrants," 1869, "The Old Gate," 1870. In black-and-white he illustrated Thackeray's "Philip" and "Dennis Duval," and his illustrations to Miss Thackeray's "The Village on the Cliff" I have had framed and hung in my studio as the best illustrations to a story I have ever seen. And yet, it is sad to think, these beautiful productions were the work of a poor individual: small in stature, eaten up by sensitiveness and suspicion. I remember those who knew him telling me that he covered his pictures with newspapers and painted a little bit at a time, so as to prevent his most intimate friends seeing what he was doing. But the most interesting account of how he worked is given in the *Magazine of Art* by that genial Royal Academician, the late Mr. J. E. Hodgson, who knew Walker well: "His mind was not cultivated; he was inarticulate, and his conversation gave no idea of his powers. His intellect, I should opine, was of rather a slow and lethargic cast. Never did artist groan as he did in the throes of production. It was painful to see him; he would sit for hours over a sheet of paper, biting his nails, of which there was very little left on either hand; his brows would knit, and the muscles of his jaw, which was square and prominent, would twitch convulsively, like one in pain;

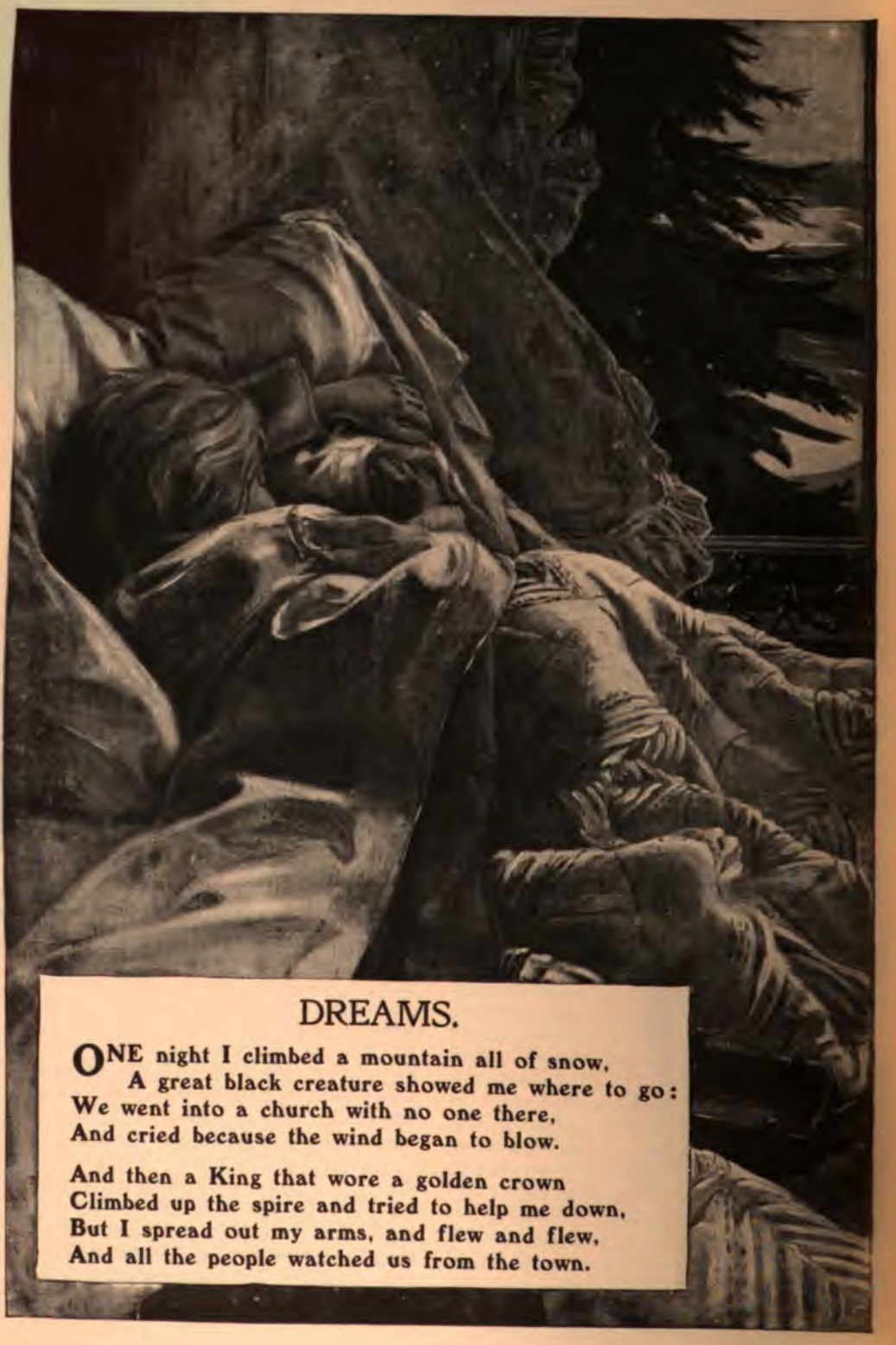
and at the end, all that could be discerned were a few faint pencil-scratches, the dim outline of a female figure, perhaps, but beautiful as a dream—full of grace, loveliness, and vitality. A few scratches would indicate a background, a background which seemed a revelation, so completely was it the appropriate setting to the figure."

R. L. STEVENSON.

Robert Louis Stevenson at work is described by an interviewer of the *English Illustrated Magazine* who visited the great novelist in his home at Vailima, Samoa, a few years before his death. In a house designed by the author himself, 600 ft. above the sea-level, the novelist had a splendid library, full of curios, pictures, and many treasures and luxuries, but, curious to say, he confessed to his interviewer: "I can't write in that library; it's all so suitable for a literary man, it puts every idea out of my head. I like a little den like this, with nothing in it to distract me — a deal kitchen table and a couple of chairs; but the latter are really mere luxuries, quite unnecessary. I have lived in every sort of place, and find that a mat on the ground is as comfortable as anything, as long as we have our own special brand of tobacco—we are slaves to that: we have allowed Three Castles to insinuate itself into our lives! Breakfast is brought to me here every morning at five, but I have often done an hour's work before that."

FRED WALKER.

Perhaps no man has more literally taken off his coat to work than Rudyard Kipling. A friend of mine, who saw a good deal of him in Africa during the late war, and who for a short time assisted him in the journal published by war correspondents, tells me that Kipling was a most wonderful worker, and might often be seen with plenty of paper and ink before him, his pipe alight—an idea, and then, if writing verse, a tune to help out the idea, accompanying himself by tapping the table with his fingers. Mr. E. Kay Robinson, who was editor of the paper in India to which Kipling contributed his earliest successes, has told us in the *English Illustrated Magazine* that: "In the heat of summer, white cotton trousers and a thin vest constituted his office attire. He had a habit of dipping his pen frequently deep into the inkpot, and as his movements were abrupt, almost jerky, the ink used to fly. When he darted into my room, as he used to do about one thing or another in connection with the contents of the paper a dozen times in the morning, I had to shout to him to "Stand off!" otherwise, as I knew by experience, the abrupt halt he would make, and the flourish with which he placed the proof in his hand before me, would send the penful of ink—he always had a *full* pen in his hand—flying over me. Driving or sometimes walking home to breakfast in his light attire, plentifully besprinkled with ink, his spectacled face peeping out under an enormous, mushroom-shaped pith hat, Kipling was a quaint-looking object."



DREAMS.

ONE night I climbed a mountain all of snow,
A great black creature showed me where to go:
We went into a church with no one there,
And cried because the wind began to blow.

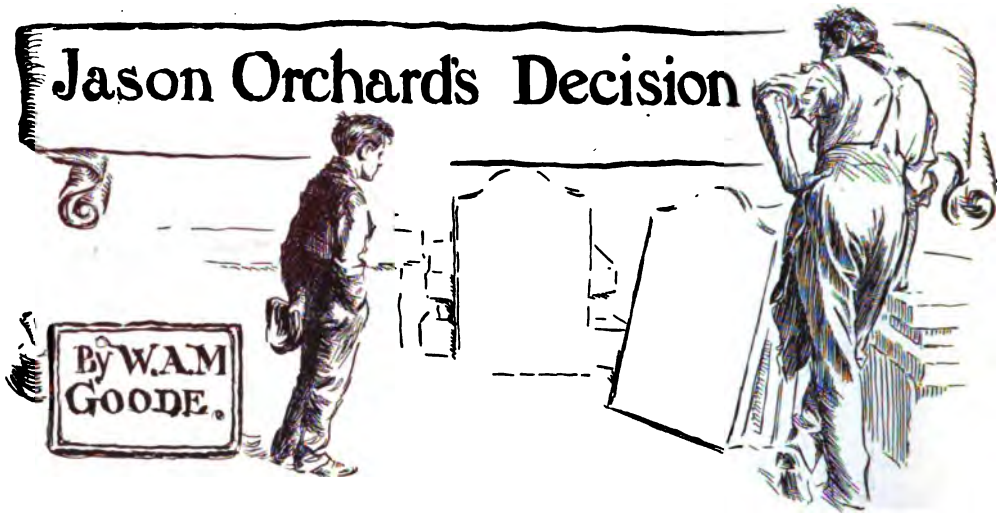
And then a King that wore a golden crown
Climbed up the spire and tried to help me down,
But I spread out my arms, and flew and flew,
And all the people watched us from the town.

They chased me through the streets, but I ran fast,
And got into a secret place at last.
I'd float down stairways, touching just my toes,
And laugh and mock at them as I went past.

And then we went to Cinderella's ball,
I had no shoes nor stockings on at all:
They smiled and pointed at me till I cried,
And woke up just as when you slip and fall.

JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM.

Jason Orchard's Decision



"THORN!" shouted the chief sub-editor.

The new reporter jumped up from his desk and hurried to the side of his chief. For one whole week Cyrus Thorn had been employed by the *Gazette*, and, so far, all his work had been waiting for something to do—sad and weary contrast to the breathless excitement of the newspaper life he had pictured.

"Read that," said the chief-sub. "It's from the *Western Courier*—a reliable paper."

This is what Thorn read—

"It is rumoured that Jason Orchard, the famous New York millionaire, will give five hundred thousand dollars to those who suffered in the recent terrific cyclone at Fairflower, Kansas. Mr. Orchard was born at Fairflower."

"You must go at once," said the chief-sub, "and see Jason Orchard. I suppose I'd better tell you that he is the meanest man in New York. He's worth millions, yet, rather than spend a penny for a newspaper, he'll wait for the papers other people leave in the morning trains. I can't imagine that this paragraph is true, for Jason has never been accused of helping a living soul except himself. It's past all comprehension that old Jason—he's over seventy—should give five dollars, let alone five hundred thousand, to Fairflower, or any other place. It would take a mighty sight bigger cyclone than struck Fairflower to get money out of Jason." The chief-sub chuckled softly at his own sardonic humour. "Still," he resumed, "the *Western Courier* ought to know what it's talking about; and we want a good, strong denial from the old man himself. You'll find him at his house in Fifth Avenue. He'll be as mad as a hatter when he sees this clipping about Fairflower, and you'd best excuse yourself for suggesting that he might be generous. If he talks, so much the better; but get at him some way, and hurry back."

As Thorn was departing, the chief-sub, mollified by the succinctness of his own summary of Jason Orchard, shouted to the cub reporter—

"Say, if the old man hits you, don't hit him back. Telephone me, and we will have him up for assault. That," murmured the chief-sub, "would be a better story than *you* are likely to get."

The brusqueness of the orders and the unpleasantness of the errand in no way detracted from the enthusiasm with which Thorn bounded down the steps and ran, rather than walked, upon his initial assignment. For the first time in his life he was going to "do an interview," and with a man whose name was known throughout America. Apart from his extraordinary wealth and public meanness, Jason Orchard was known all over America and Europe as the man who once averted, by means of his hoarded millions of ready cash, a widespread financial panic. In place of national gratitude, Mr. Orchard had received and continued to receive national interest, which he preferred.

It was thoroughly consistent with the bearish attitude which the great millionaire preserved towards the Market and mundane affairs that he treated Thorn's card with scant attention. "Go and see what this

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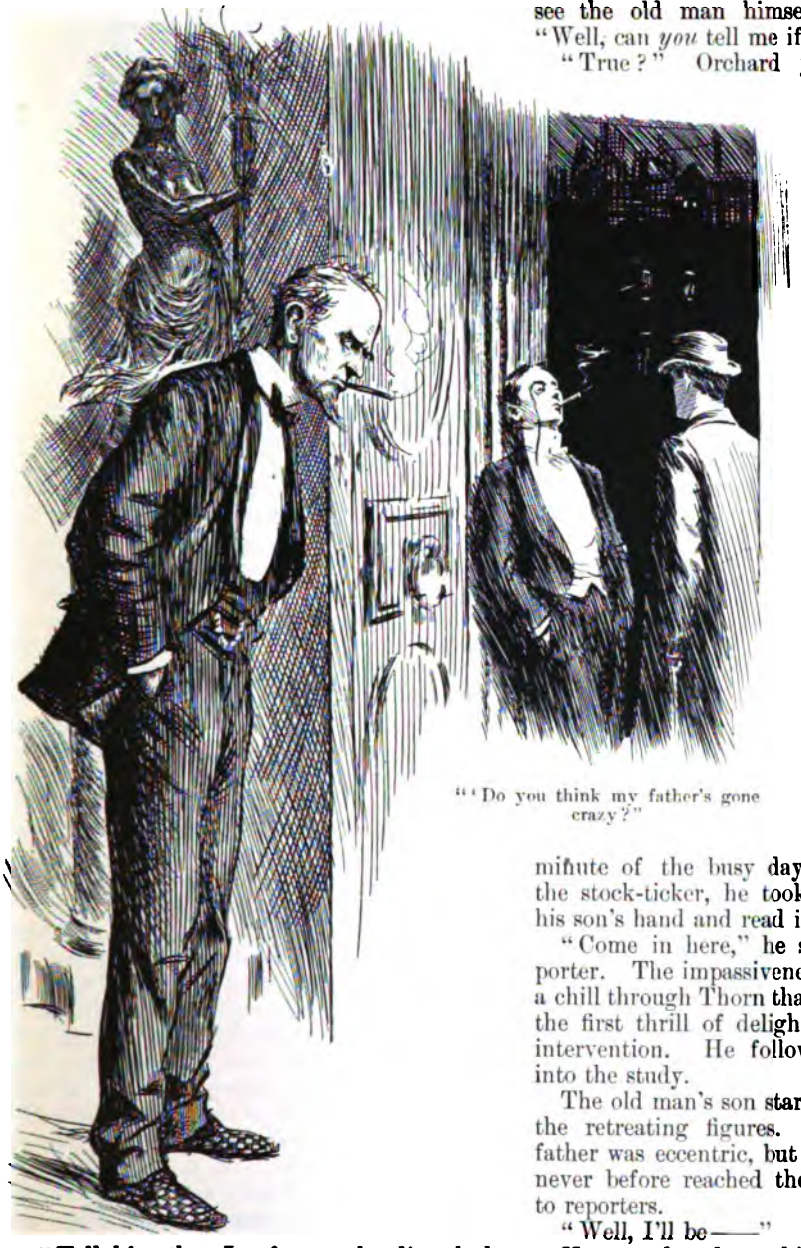
reporter wants," he said somewhat testily to his son. And as that young man, already worth a small fortune in his own right, was departing to fulfil the errand, Mr. Orchard added—



"'Do you think my father's gone crazy?'"

"Tell him that I refuse to be disturbed at this hour of the night by fool newspapers."

Thorn, still standing on the steps, listened patiently while Orchard junior conveyed an exaggerated version of the foregoing. Thorn entreated the millionaire's son to take the clipping, reporting the gift to Fairflower of five hundred thousand dollars, to his father. Curt refusal was the only response.

In despair of fulfilling his instructions "to see the old man himself," Thorn asked: "Well, can *you* tell me if it's true?"

"True?" Orchard junior's voice rose almost to a shriek. "True? *My* father giving five hundred thousand dollars to some one-horse place in Kansas? Do you think my father's gone crazy?"

Young Orchard laughed loud and bitterly. His earlier days had taught him stern lessons in paternal penuriousness. "Why," and he looked half pityingly at Thorn, "why, I don't believe my father was even born at Fairflower. And——"

"What's that about Fairflower?"

Jason Orchard appeared in the doorway. In the same quiet way in which he was accustomed every other minute of the busy day to tear tape from the stock-ticker, he took the clipping from his son's hand and read it.

"Come in here," he said to the cub reporter. The impassiveness of the tone sent a chill through Thorn that instantly banished the first thrill of delight at the unexpected intervention. He followed Jason Orchard into the study.

The old man's son stared in amazement at the retreating figures. He knew that his father was eccentric, but his eccentricity had never before reached the point of courtesy to reporters.

"Well, I'll be——"

He turned and saw his mother, who had been attracted by the voices in the hall. "I do hope Jason will be kind to him," said Mrs. Orchard rather fearfully. "He has such a nice face—for a reporter." Then Mrs. Orchard went to bed.

In the study, Thorn stood dry-lipped, leaden-throated, his eyes riveted on this strange, hard face that now was bent over the clipping from the *Western Courier*. For all the gifts the world had to offer, Thorn could not break the silence.

Then he heard a dry, rasping voice saying—

"So you want to know if this is true?" The words seemed to come from miles away. "Does it occur to you, young man," the voice went on, "that if I *did* give five hundred thousand dollars to Fairflower, it would be no concern of the newspapers? Have I not a right to meditate giving to charity without being cross-examined by reporters?"

The implied sarcasm, the open challenge, and the realisation that an interview had actually commenced, restored all Thorn's energy. At twenty-two years of age one is not permanently overawed.

"I know it's none of my business," Thorn began, "or anybody else's." It sounded rather lame, but he plunged boldly on, looking straight into the old man's half-shut eyes while he talked. "You see, sir, other people—that is, the *Western Courier*—circulated the report, and the *Gazette*—that's *my* paper, you know—has no other alternative except to ask you personally. It's only in the interests of truth; and, of course, we didn't think it was really true. That is," added Thorn hastily, "we thought—I mean—we scarcely thought——" Thorn stopped.

"Quite right. You imagined I wouldn't be giving such a sum to charity." Jason Orchard smiled grimly at the boy's embarrassment. "The meanest man in America isn't likely to play the fool like that, is he—Mr.—" he took up the card—"Mr. Thorn?"

"Well, I didn't say—at least, I didn't mean to intimate that." Thorn's face was crimson. With palpable effort to turn the conversation, he added: "Then you must remember, sir, what a sensation such a report would cause at Fairflower. I know the town. They'd go crazy in that little place. It would scarcely be fair to them, would it, sir, to let such a canard—such a report go without contra—I mean—er—without—well—something a bit more definite?"

Jason Orchard laughed aloud—a queer, discordant laugh at Thorn's embarrassment. Mentally he calculated that a young man of such pleasing address could with reformation and training become a conscientious salesman of gilt-edged bonds.

"You say you've been to Fairflower?" Jason Orchard looked sharply at his interviewer. By a stroke of luck Thorn had been on a train that was "stalled" at Fairflower *en route* to New York only about ten days before, and just after the cyclone had wrecked the little western town. In the one day that Thorn was obliged to wait there he had learned a good deal.

"Oh, you should see it!" he said, warming up to his subject and forgetting the formidable personality of his solitary auditor. "Everything's wiped out at Fairflower. The schoolhouse is down, the Methodist and Episcopal churches are unroofed, the depôt is wrecked, and except the courthouse there's scarcely a place standing. The streets and avenues are all blown into each other and tangled up together, until the people who got out safe couldn't identify what was left of their houses, let alone their belongings. When I was there, they'd got out most of the dead—but some they wouldn't be able to get out for days. The worst thing was the children, and the mothers looking for them. One woman went stark mad looking for her child in the avenue they lived on, and afterwards the child was found quite well, blown nearly half a mile away, not even bruised.

"Then there was the cemetery all turned up. The rainstorm that followed the cyclone wrecked the cemetery, and almost all the old graves were washed away. Fearful sight, sir—corpses, buried years ago, lying all around. Not a tombstone standing. You read about the typhoid epidemic that broke out after the cyclone?" Jason Orchard shook his head in dissent. "That was almost entirely due to the exposed corpses from the cemetery. Oh! it was a ghastly mess—— What's the matter, sir?"

Cyrus Thorn jumped forward; and as he did so, Jason Orchard deliberately picked up a toothpick from the floor. Thorn could have sworn he saw the old man sway and fall; yet there was the toothpick, and there was the millionaire erect and impassive. The uncanniness of the proceeding and the uncomfortable feeling of having made some stupid mistake recalled Thorn to the object of his visit.

"Well, sir, I mustn't take up any more of your time. I suppose I can deny the report—as you weren't even born at Fairflower?"

"Who said I wasn't born at Fairflower?" Jason Orchard's tones were particularly acid.

"Your son," said Thorn.

"He doesn't amount to a row of beans," and at that moment Jason Orchard meant

"Jason Orchard laughed—a queer, discordant laugh."

it. "I *was* born at Fairflower; and, what's more——"

The old man stopped and took another look at Thorn's face. It was the open countenance of a youngster who knew no guile. Then there was a long silence, peculiarly trying to Thorn. It was broken by Jason Orchard. In reminiscent tones he observed—

"You see, young man, my mother's buried in that cemetery—that same cemetery at Fairflower—that's wrecked." In sharp, doubting accents, he added: "You're sure it was wrecked? You're telling me the truth? The graves were open?"

Thorn blurted out a dry, uncomfortable "Yes." He was not in the least appreciating this penalty for prying into the secrets of other people's lives.

Jason Orchard lay back in his chair and forgot Thorn, forgot that he sat in his own great house in Fifth Avenue, forgot that beside his hand were millions in bonds only waiting his signature to become priceless, forgot everything, except one bleak February morning some sixty years before. Half a blizzard was raging over a little Kansas township that belied its name of Fairflower. A small, poorly clad boy was standing, sole mourner, beside an open grave. The tears that fell on the coffin were the flowers of his own bitter grief for the mother that was dead.

With a sharp effort, Jason Orchard pulled himself together and started from his chair. For years he had scarcely thought of that tragedy of his youth. He realised that somebody was stealing quietly out of the study.

"Hold on there!" The voice had regained its note of harsh command. Thorn stopped at the door like a thief caught in the act. Then, for once in his life, Jason Orchard was guilty of subterfuge, for he rubbed vigorously at his eyes, as if it were sleep that blurred them.

"I'm an old fool!" He said this more to himself than to Thorn. Speaking directly to Thorn, he added: "I dozed off. You've kept me here a long time with your twaddle. You've no right!"

"I'm mighty sorry, sir. Good night." There was a note of sincere apology in Thorn's voice. Once again Jason Orchard stopped him.

"Look here! What are you going to say in the paper about that report?"

"I don't quite know," said Thorn. "Deny it, I suppose."

"Don't be a young fool!" Jason Orchard made the retort almost viciously.

"You mean, sir—you mean—you mean that you're——" All Thorn's budding newspaper instinct rose to the surface. "You mean you *are* going to do it? Going to give five hundred thousand dollars to Fairflower?" The almost breathless surprise and anticipation recalled Jason Orchard to his workaday world.

"Well, I'm only thinking of doing so. Indeed, I'm thinking of giving Fairflower something nice to help it out—to help fix up the cemetery and things in general—underderstand? Yes, the cemetery."

Jason Orchard lingered on the word, as if it fascinated him.

"But it's more likely to be—yes—well, you see, I've been fairly successful of late. You can say—oh!—say it's more likely to be two millions. Good night, young man. Come and see me again."

Like a drunken man, Thorn went out of the house. Just before the door closed, he heard the same passionless voice that had told him to "Come in" now calling after him—

"Of course, young man, nothing's *really* settled yet."

Exactly what Thorn told the chief-sub when he got back to the *Daily Gazette* office he can never quite remember. What followed, however, is a matter of record. The chief-sub called the night editor and the editor into hurried consultation. In consequence, they called up the proprietor on the telephone, and as a result Thorn was told to sit down and write an interview with Jason Orchard, in which the meanest man in America announced his intention to give two million dollars to the relief of devastated Fairflower. The editor came out personally to Thorn and said that he had always been sure that there was a brilliant career ahead of him. He confessed to being rather puzzled over the contradictory statements which Thorn had verbally attributed to Mr. Orchard, but advised Thorn to disregard these. Provisos such as "nothing yet really settled" were evidently due to Mr. Orchard's modesty in his new *rôle*. The chief-sub shook Thorn's hand so hard that he could scarcely write, and assured him that all through the week he had been saving up this story for his especial benefit. Then the editor retired to his room. Through tubes, telephones, and other queer devices he ordered the entire first page to be set apart for the announcement of Jason Orchard's gift to Fairflower. He discoursed, always through tubes, upon type with large and wonderful "face," and abused, with marvellous facility of language, the foreman because he had no "war-head" type fit for use. The chief leader-writer was informed of the facts.

"Write," said the editor, "a eulogistic article explaining that old Orchard has at last shown himself in his true colours; how mistaken and vicious other papers have been in abusing him; what an object lesson he is to other millionaires for having avoided the pitfalls of indiscriminate and varied charity, and how fit a thing it is that the *Gazette* should be singled out to announce such unprecedented philanthropy."

Meanwhile Thorn struggled with his story. There was really very little he could write—wild horses would not have torn from him mention of Jason Orchard's mother or of the cemetery; yet somehow he managed to work out a column or two, which mostly dealt with Jason Orchard's house, his deep interest in his birthplace, and the casual, modest way in which he admitted his extraordinary philanthropy.

Before midnight all the men in the *Daily Gazette* office were scanning the proofs of what was declared to be the best "beat" of the year. And Cyrus Thorn went home, a very tired but happy and congratulated youngster, with a largely increased salary.

When Jason Orchard, always an early riser, came down at half past six the following morning, he surprised his household by ordering a *Daily Gazette*. Stretching all across the first page, he read—

"Jason Orchard Gives Away Two Millions."

In descending pyramids of black type it was set forth—

"The Greatest of all American Financiers becomes the Greatest of Philanthropists"—"Princely Gift to Devastated Kansas Town that Gave him Birth"—"Plutocrat Appears in New Light"—and so on.

With a grim smile, Jason Orchard departed for the city, and on his way he read in the *Gazette* how greatly the world had misunderstood him during all these seventy years; how, instead of sordidly amassing wealth to gratify miserly instincts, he had been reserving his millions for great and proper occasions, such as the disaster at his birthplace.

"Suddenly Jason Orchard shoved his chair back and stood upright."

"What a fool the boy was to jump at conclusions!" Jason Orchard laughed aloud, to the intense astonishment of his fellow-passengers. The idea of his *giving* two millions to anybody or anything! He had been sentimental, a bit weak and out-of-sorts the evening before, but he had not said anything that could justify this absurd thing in the *Gazette*. Why, his last words to the young reporter had been to emphasise that nothing was settled.

He gazed humorously at the huge portrait of himself which took up the middle portion of the first page. Beside it was the history of his own hard life. Somehow or another, he could not feel it in his heart to be annoyed. It was such a huge joke!

He read the editorial over again. After all, it *was* rather pleasant to find out that instead of being the meanest man in America, one was the least understood of great philanthropists.

"Perhaps," thought Jason Orchard, "I've been mistaken in myself. In any case, I suppose I rather misled the boy. When I deny this yarn, he will lose his job—I must look after him." A clerk in the office had been discharged the week before, and Jason Orchard mentally appointed Cyrus Thorn to take his place—though taking a newspaper man into the business would surely destroy all discipline. "Still," thought Mr. Orchard, "generosity must be exercised," with this reservation—"at rare intervals."

He was reading the analysis of his own philanthropy for the third time, when it suddenly occurred to him that in all the eulogy, in all the biographical sketches, and the accounts of the distress at Fairflower, there was no mention of the cemetery or of his dead mother. "Curious," thought Jason Orchard, "that young fellow didn't say something. Nice, though. Glad he didn't. Think I'll take a run over to Fairflower. Never been there since I was a boy. Get a pass from Wilkins—then the trip won't cost much."

The train stopped, and Jason Orchard walked to his office. His son came in.

"Father," said Orchard junior, "there are about twenty newspaper men waiting for your denial of that fool story in the *Gazette*. I've told them you've not gone crazy, and that it's a lie from top to bottom, but they insist on having a denial from you. Shall I write you one?"

"H'm." The old man cogitated. "No," he said finally. "I'll talk to them myself. Send them in here in about five minutes. I'll just read my letters first."

Orchard junior went out. Then the great bear leader of the Market broke the habit of many years, for, instead of opening his business letters before attending to any other thing, he fumbled around at a little secret drawer in his desk. Only a few papers were there. They were dust-covered, and even the owner had almost forgotten their existence. They were all respectable-looking documents, all except one. This was a dirty sheet of paper, evidently a receipted bill of sorts. Across the heading, this faded, pencilled inscription was written—

"My first savings.—J. O."

Jason Orchard fingered it as reverently as any bond for a million dollars. For a few moments he stared at it, and then his glance fell on the *Gazette* stretched in front of him. He touched an electric bell.

"Tell the newspaper men to come in." A score of representatives from all the New York papers trooped in.

"I suppose, Mr. Orchard," said the spokesman, "that we may deny this report in the *Gazette?*"

The old man, whose word was law to the stock markets of the country, nervously fingered the dirty bit of paper in front of him. Surprised at his silence, the spokesman of the reporters continued—

"I understand the *Gazette's* story was written by a beginner, who didn't understand your sardonic humour. Still, we must ask you to let us quote you as denying it. Your son's already told us it's not true, but that's scarcely good enough for us—under the circumstances."

Jason Orchard drummed nervously with his fingers on the old receipt.

"So you think it's absurd, don't you?" he said at last. "Great joke, isn't it?"

He laughed a dry, cackling laugh. Men on the wrong side of the market, pleading with Jason Orchard for money to save their fair names, had heard their financial death-knell in just such a laugh as this. The reporters prepared themselves for some scathing and characteristic remarks upon the hypocrisy and uselessness of charity. Suddenly Jason Orchard shoved his chair back and stood upright. His seventy years had taken not an inch from his six feet of stature; the spareness of age lent rather than robbed him of height.

"I want to tell you this." He faced his audience. In slow, precise manner he went on—

"All the *Gazette* says is true." An ill-concealed exclamation of astonishment came from the group of newspaper men. "I am going to give two million dollars to Fairflower."

It was done, irrevocably done!

His hearers were far too amazed at the announcement to observe how convulsively Jason Orchard's fingers clutched and re-clutched on a faded bit of paper. One, collecting his wits more quickly than the rest, commenced—

"But, Mr. Orchard, will you tell us——"

"I will tell you nothing more. You can say the meanest man in America has gone crazy, or anything you like. It doesn't matter to me. Good day, gentlemen."

The old man's tone brooked no questioning. The newspaper men filed out. When the last one had gone, Jason Orchard took out his cheque-book and wrote—

"Pay to the order of the Mayor of Fairflower, two million dollars."

On this cheque he pinned a faded bit of paper, crumpled in the last pangs of a man parting with the money he worshipped. He carefully erased the words "My first savings." Then he again read the receipt. It was dated fifty years ago. On it was written—

"To tombstone, on lot sixteen, Fairflower Cemetery; Mrs. Orchard's grave, fifteen dollars. Paid in full."

Across this Jason Orchard wrote curtly, but so that the Mayor of Fairflower must understand—

"This grave to be kept in good repair."

BALLADE OF THE BRAVE.

PRATE not to me of weaklings, who
Lament this life and naught achieve.
I hymn the vast and valiant crew
Of those who have scant time to grieve;
Firm-set their fortunes to retrieve,
They sing for luck a lusty stave,
The world's staunch workers, by your leave,—
This is the ballade of the brave.

Wan women, steel to staggering blows;
White souls from many a nether place;
The humble heroes and the foes
Of sham; the hunters of the base,
The men with missions in their face,
The clan who straighten, heal and save
The young who think each card an ace,—
This is the ballade of the brave.

Those who with stingless laugh and jest
Sweeten the labour; those who stake
Their all on some sky-reaching quest,
Unconquerable for conscience' sake.
The warriors who a last stand make,
Though loss o'erwhelm them, wave on wave;
Smiling, the while their hearts do break,—
This is the ballade of the brave!

Brothers, I kiss my hand to ye,
That stoutly flare unto the grave,
Facing all odds high-heartedly,—
This is the ballade of the brave.

RICHARD BURTON.

LOCAL RATES AND TAXES.

By JOHN HOLT SCHOOLING.

PART II.

[*The final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, the Annual Reports of the Local Government Board, and other official returns of local rates and taxes.*]

WE will now look at the spending of all this money. Table H contains all the items of expenditure for the year 1900-1901, which is the most recent year given in the current Blue-book.

Looking at Table H, we are at once impressed by the fact that the leading item of local expenditure is "loans repaid, and interest on loans." In one year only, nearly 17 millions sterling were spent upon this item, or over 15 per cent. of the total expenditure of 110 millions.

This result cannot be regarded as a satisfactory feature in local finance, even if we allow that most of the outstanding debt has been incurred in respect of what are called "reproductive undertakings" by local authorities. Moreover, as I will show later, there is grave reason for doubting the reproductive nature of these undertakings. The six leading items of expenditure account for no less than 60 per cent. of the total expenditure, and if, as one has reason to believe, the administration of some of these leading features of local activity is lavish and reckless, there is ample cause in the magnitude of these six items alone to account for a rise in the rates.

The items set out in Table H enable readers to see the yearly expenditure on the numerous activities undertaken by local spending authorities; and whether all these activities do or do not come within the right limits of local enterprise, they come within the legal limits.

Table J shows the total of local expenditure during 1885–1900, distinguishing the expenditure paid out of loans and the expenditure not paid out of loans — an important point. There has been a very large increase in the expenditure paid out of loans, notably since 1890, when the reorganised scheme of local government and finance was coming into full play—from 7 millions in 1889–1890 to nearly 25 millions in 1899–1900. And this increase in expenditure paid out of loans has not been merely an actual increase; it has also been an increase relatively to the total expenditure, although the total expenditure has also greatly increased. The following statement illustrates this point.

Percentage of Expenditure paid out of Loans to Total Expenditure.

	Per cent.
1884–1885	18·3
1889–1890	12·8
1894–1895	18·3
1899–1900	24·6

Thus, in 1899–1900, no less than nearly 25 per cent. of all local expenditure was paid out of loans.

As a matter of principle this may rightly be objected to, even if this large expenditure out of loans had been wisely spent. But as a matter of practice, we shall see, I think, that this money has not been wisely spent—when we come to consider "reproductive undertakings."

Bearing in mind the great national importance of the spending, locally, of the huge amounts with which we are dealing, I have thought it well to show in Table K a condensed summary of local expenditure during 1885–1900 upon each of the principal items of local expenditure.

Perhaps the best way to read Table K is to glance from year 1884-1885 to year 1899–1900, comparing the amounts spent in each of those two years upon each item named in Table K. In every instance, the increase in expenditure will be seen to be very great, and this increase is wholly out of proportion to the increase in the population

which has occurred during this relatively short period of fifteen years. Taken as a whole, we see that local expenditure has nearly doubled during 1885–1900 — an enormous increase in local burdens.

per 100 of population, and in 1899-1900, to £315 per 100 of population! And although the growth in the rateable value of property has been very large, yet the local expenditure per £100 of rateable property has

TABLE H.—The Aggregate Expenditure of all the Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales during the One Year 1900–1901. The items of expenditure are arranged in the order of the amount of each item. [*See Diagram* IV.]

Items of Local Expenditure.		Amount of Each Item of Expenditure.
		£
1. Loans repaid, and interest on loans		16,873,000
2. Highways, including street improvements, street watering and scavenging, etc.		14,022,000
3. Education and schools		11,652,000
4. Relief of the poor*		10,718,000
5. Gasworks		7,075,000
6. Police and police-stations, gaols, etc.		5,358,000
7. Various public works and purposes (not included under other headings):—	£	
House refuse, removal and destruction of	1,800,000	
Vaccination	252,000	
Registration of voters	244,000	
Valuation of property, etc.	193,000	
Registration of births, deaths, and marriages	98,000	
Miscellaneous	2,717,000	
		5,304,000
8. Expenditure (not included under other headings) in respect of:—	£	
Salaries and superannuation pay	2,357,000	
Establishment charges	791,000	
Legal and parliamentary proceedings	299,000	
Miscellaneous	1,045,000	
		4,492,000
9. Waterworks		4,476,000
10. Sewage, and sewage disposal works		4,330,000
11. Tramways		4,302,000
12. Electricity supply (other than for public lighting)		4,070,000
13. Lunatics and lunatic-asylums		3,530,000
14. Harbours, piers, docks, and quays		2,992,000
15. Lighting streets, roads, etc. (public lighting)		1,765,000
16. Private street works, and other private works		1,667,000
17. Parks, pleasure-grounds, commons, and open spaces		1,203,000
18. Hospitals, other than workhouse infirmaries and those belonging to the Metropolitan Asylum District		1,044,000
19. Public buildings, offices, etc. (not included under other headings)		815,000
20. Baths, washhouses, open bathing-places		649,000
21. Markets		631,000
22. Cemeteries		629,000
23. Libraries, museums, and schools of science and art		592,000
24. Fire engines, brigades, and stations, etc.		581,000
25. Housing of the working classes		541,000
26. Land drainage, embankment, river conservancy, and sea defences		434,000
27. Bridges and ferries		424,000
28. Prosecutions, and conveyance and maintenance of prisoners		169,000
29. Allotments		47,000
Total Expenditure		£110,385,000

* Not including the cost of pauper lunatics in county asylums, etc.

In this connection, we have only to look at Table L to see how largely the increase in local expenditure has exceeded both the growth of population and the growth of rateable property. For example, in 1884-1885, local expenditure amounted to £199 increased from £37 in 1884-1885 to £57 in 1899-1900. Local rates are now increasing far more rapidly than in previous periods.

The extent to which local spending authorities have been piling up local debt can only be regarded as reckless. See

Table M, which shows the outstanding local debt at each fifth year, beginning with the year 1874-1875.

We see here that this local debt has risen from 93 millions to 294 millions—during twenty-five years only! And to 317 millions in 1900–1901, the last year for which the accounts are published.

The local debt per 100 of population has increased from £389 in 1874–1875 to £917 in 1899–1900, and to more than £917 per 100 of population now. Do ratepayers know that local spending authorities have run up a debt, on the ratepayers' account, of approximately £10 per head of population, counting in every man, woman, and child, whether a ratepayer or not? Here it may be urged that the value of the "reproductive undertakings" can be set against this debt. But, as I will show later, these undertakings are being worked at a loss, and they have already needed assistance from the rates.

And Table M also shows that local debt per £100 of rateable value of property has increased from £80 to £167 during 1875–1900. Note that as far back as 1879–1880, when the local debt was £102 per £100 of the rateable value of property, this local debt had actually exceeded the rateable value of the property itself. Soon, local debt will amount to twice the amount of the rateable value of the property upon which local rates are levied.

The extraordinary piling up of local debt which has been shown is, perhaps, partly due to a desire on the part of local spending authorities to make their aggregate efforts in the incurring of debt rival the National Debt of the United Kingdom.

Table N compares the Local Debt of England and Wales (only) with the National Debt of the United Kingdom during 1875-1900.

We see that in 1874-1875, this local debt was only 12 per cent. of the National Debt; that there has been a steady rise throughout the period 1875-1900, resulting in £47 of local debt for every £100 of National Debt in the year 1899-1900. And this local debt would be bigger if it included the local debts of Scotland and of Ireland.

If, as in Table O, we compare the yearly receipts of the local spending authorities of England and Wales, with the yearly receipts into the National Exchequer of the United Kingdom, we find that local receipts have greatly gained upon national receipts, despite the fact that national receipts have gone up and up to a vast extent. In 1874-1875, local receipts (in England and Wales only) were £57 per £100 of the national revenue of the United Kingdom. In 1899-1900, local receipts were £84 per cent. of the national revenue, going up to £86 per cent. in the year 1900-1901.

The enormous increases in local debt, etc., I have been showing are quite outside of any reasonable rate of progress in local finance, and they are distinctly a source of weakness and of danger to the nation.

I come now to the very important and costly matter of "reproductive undertakings," which must receive careful attention.

I waive expression of opinion as to whether these "reproductive undertakings" ought to be carried on by local spending authorities. That is a matter of principle upon which opinions must widely differ. And I confine myself to the practical part of the matter, to an analysis of how these undertakings have worked out from a financial point of view.

Table P sums up the number of these "reproductive undertakings," etc., and the position of them as regards capital on March 31st, 1902.

We note that nearly all municipal Corporations who can undertake these various trading businesses do undertake them—299 Corporations out of 317. And that the 299

TABLE J.—The Aggregate Expenditure of Local Spending Authorities. England and Wales. For each fifth year, beginning with the year 1884–1885.* Distinguishing the expenditure paid out of Loans from the expenditure not paid out of Loans. [*See Diagram* V.]

Year.	Expenditure of Local Spending Authorities.		
	Not paid out of Loans.	Paid out of Loans.	Total Expenditure.
	£	£	£
1884–1885	44,054,000	9,854,000	53,908,000
1889–1890	48,180,000	7,088,000	55,268,000
1894–1895	59,715,000	13,381,000	73,096,000
1899–1900	75,990,000	24,872,000	100,862,000

* The returns do not give the facts for the years 1874–75 and 1879–1880, for the reason that the accounts of expenditure were then kept differently from the accounts since 1884.

NOTE.—In the last year, 1900–1901, for which the facts are published, the figures were, total expenditure, £110,385,000; of which amount, £27,948,000 were paid out of loans.

TABLE K.—The Expenditure of Local Spending Authorities, distinguishing certain Principal Items. England and Wales, 1884–1900. Stated in the order of the amount of expenditure in the year 1899–1900.

Item of Expenditure.	In year 1884–1885.	In year 1889–1890.	In year 1894–1895.	In year 1899–1900.
	£	£	£	£
Loans repaid, and interest on loans	9,879,000	11,085,000	12,721,000	15,699,000
Highways, etc.	7,889,000	6,731,000	8,335,000	11,875,000
Education and schools	4,581,000	4,820,000	8,412,000	10.908,000
Poor Law purposes *	7,355,000	7,040,000	8,471,000	10,038,000
Waterworks	2,024,000	2,227,000	2,931,000	5,721,000
Gasworks	2,997,000	3,063,000	4,165,000	5,609,000
Police, etc.	3,518,000	3,977,000	4,701,000	5,238,000
Sewerage, etc.	1,902,000	1,859,000	3,091,000	3,748,000
Electric lighting (other than public lighting) †	—	—	797,000	3,387,000
Lunatics and asylums	1,731,000	1,648,000	2,185,000	3,318,000
Harbours, piers, docks	2,582,000	1,805,000	2,092,000	3,252,000
Tramways	125,000	64,000	164,000	2,499,000
Public lighting	867,000	938,000	1,124,000	1,468,000
Total of the above thirteen items	45,400,000	45,257,000	59,189,000	82,760,000
All other expenditure	8,508,000	10,011,000	13,907,000	18,102,000
Total expenditure	53,908,000	55,268,000	73,096,000	100,862.000

* These amounts spent on Poor Law purposes are not quite the same as those given in Table B. The latter amounts are taken from another official return, which includes all expenditure upon the relief of the poor and upon purposes connected therewith.

† This heading was not used in the returns for the years 1884-1885 and 1889-1890.

Corporations each run an average of 3½ business undertakings apiece.

The total capital invested was 121 millions, of which 117 millions were borrowed capital. And of this borrowed capital, only 16 millions had been paid off at March 31st, 1902.

Coming now to the *yearly* income and expenditure, etc., in respect of these 1,029 "reproductive undertakings," we have, in Table Q, a condensed statement of this crucial part of the whole matter. Table Q

TABLE L.—The Aggregate Expenditure of Local Spending Authorities. England and Wales. For each fifth year, beginning with the year 1884–1885. *Showing the expenditure per* 100 *of population, and the expenditure per* £100 *of Rateable Value of the Property assessed to the Poor Rate.*

Year.	Total Expenditure of Local Spending Authorities.	Expenditure.	
		Per 100 of Population.	Per £100 of Rateable Value of Property.
	£	£	£
1884-1885	53,908,000	199	37
1889-1890	55,268,000	193	37
1894-1895	73,096,000	241	45
1899-1900	100,862,000	315	57

NOTE.—For the year 1900–1901, the total expenditure was £110,385,000; equal to £340 per 100 of population, and to £61 per £100 of Rateable Value.

TABLE M.—The Outstanding Debt of all Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales, in every fifth year, beginning with the year 1874–1875. *Showing also the amount of debt per* 100 *of population, and the amount of debt per* £100 *of the rateable value of property assessed to the Poor Rate.* [*See Diagram* VI.]

Year.	The Outstanding Debt of Local Spending Authorities.	The Amount of Debt	
		Per 100 of Population.	Per £100 of the Rateable Value of Property.
	£	£	£
1874-1875	92,820,000	389	80
1879-1880	136,934,000	586	102
1884-1885	173,208,000	640	119
1889-1890	198,671,000	695	132
1894-1895	235,335,000	777	146
1899-1900	293,864,000	917	167

NOTE.—For the year 1900–1901, the debt had risen to £316,704,000. And at the end of the year 1900–1901, sums amounting to £11,258,000 were standing to the credit of sinking funds, etc., towards the repayment of the then outstanding debt of £316,704,000.

can, to a large extent, speak for itself, but I may direct attention to some of the items in it.

Note in Table Q (1) that already we have the ominous words "deficiencies of income that were made good out of rates." These deficiencies are, in the official return, excluded from the accounts; as these singularly named "reproductive undertakings" are, in the return, confined to their own financial doings, apart from any help received from the rates.

In Table Q (3) we see that the excess of yearly income over yearly working expenses was 4·8 millions. Of this "balance," 4·2 millions were paid away in respect of borrowed capital, and 0·2 of a million was set apart for depreciation. (Note, please, in passing, the setting apart of only £200,000 per annum upon an invested capital of £121,200,000—invested for the most part in plant and machinery, which quickly depreciates. More about this anon.) This leaves a net profit of 0·4 of a million, or, more exactly, of £378,000 per annum upon a capital of £121,200,000.

I suggest that the broad facts in Table Q do not encourage us to think highly of the actual yearly working out of these 1,029 "reproductive undertakings," as regards their financial result.

But we must look at the facts in greater detail.

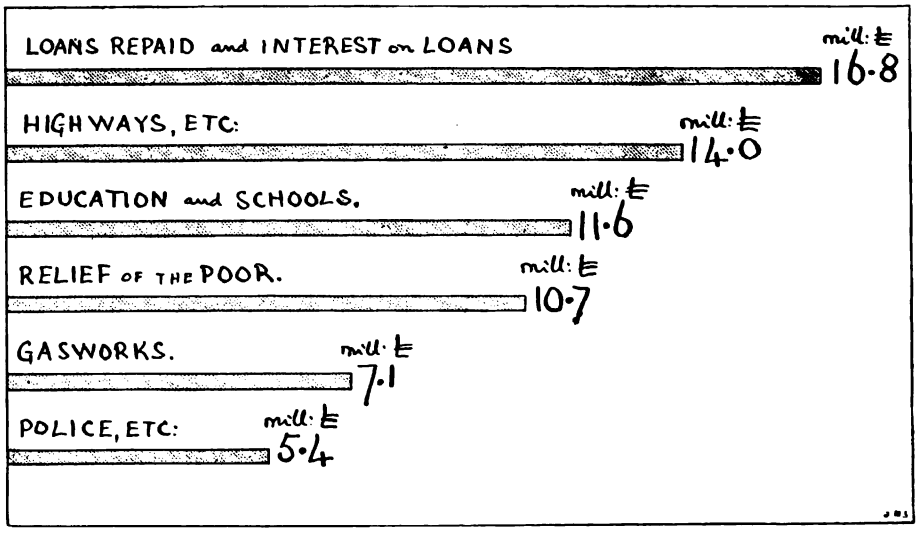
Table R shows these undertakings in their various main groups, the capital invested in each description of undertakings, and the alleged yearly profit or loss on each group of undertakings.

Five groups were worked at a profit and five at a loss, the net alleged profit being £378,281 per year.

We note, among those worked at a loss, electricity supply, upon which a capital of 12·51 millions has been spent. And this comes out after the various Corporations have credited "electricity supply" with the estimated cost of supplying electricity for public use as distinct from private use.

Looking at Table R, the question at once jumps to us: What is the yearly rate of profit, or of loss, per £100 of capital, at which these various businesses were worked?

OWING TO THE STEADY ACCUMULATION OF LOCAL DEBT, THE LEADING ITEM OF LOCAL EXPENDITURE IS NOW "LOANS REPAID AND INTEREST ON LOANS."



NOTE.—The Relief of the Poor, as above stated, does not include the cost of pauper lunatics, etc.

IV.—SHOWING THE SIX LEADING ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE OF ALL THE LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES DURING THE ONE YEAR 1900–1901. *See Table H.*

Table S answers this question. We see there the yearly rate of (alleged) profit, or of loss, per £100 of capital, for each description of "reproductive undertaking." And very poor the results are.

The only high figure is the £6 5*s.* 9*d.* for baths and washhouses. But this high figure is, unfortunately, a figure of yearly loss, not of yearly profit.

Looking, in Table S, at the yearly rates

TABLE N.—The Outstanding Debt of all Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales, Compared with the National Debt of the United Kingdom. For each fifth year, beginning with the year 1874–1875. [*See Diagram* VII.]

Year.	Local Debt (England and Wales).	National Debt (United Kingdom).	Percentage Proportion of Local Debt to National Debt.	
			Local Debt.	National Debt.
	Millions of £	Millions of £	£	£
1874–1875	92·8	772·3	12	100
1879–1880	136·9	774·0	18	100
1884–1885	173·2	740·3	23	100
1889–1890	198·7	689·9	29	100
1894–1895	235·3	657·0	36	100
1899–1900	293·9	629·0	47	100

NOTE.—The local debt of Scotland and of Ireland cannot be stated for all the years compared. If these local debts were included with the local debt for England and Wales, the percentage of local debt to National Debt would come out still higher than the above results.

of (alleged) profit per £100 of capital, we see that, omitting small miscellaneous undertakings with a capital of only £720,000, the highest profit was in gasworks—namely, £1 12*s.* 10*d.* per cent.

As regards tramways, those owned and worked by Corporations yielded a yearly profit of 19*s.* per cent., while those owned by Corporations, but *not* worked by Corporations, yielded a yearly profit of £1 10*s.* 6*d.* per cent. This seems to point to the fact that persons other than local spending authorities understand business better than it is understood by these local spending authorities.

All the undertakings that were worked at an alleged profit, taken as one whole, yielded the paltry profit of 14*s.* per £100 of capital invested.

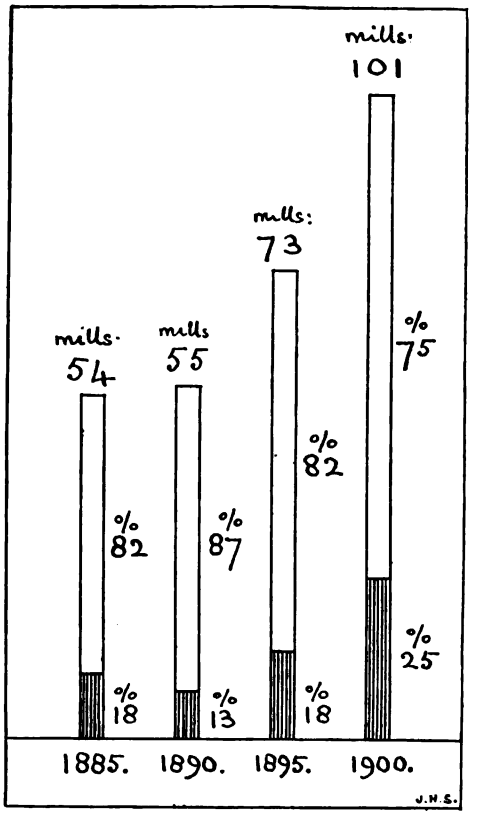
As regards the "reproductive undertakings" that were worked at a yearly loss, this loss was fairly considerable in each instance. Taken as a whole, these five groups were worked at a yearly loss of £1 5*s.* 11*d.* per cent.

And taking all the undertakings in Table S as one whole, they were worked at a yearly (alleged) profit of 6*s.* 3*d.* per £100 of capital invested in them. Truly a paltry result.

By the way, we may note that under the heading "Other Reproductive Undertakings" in Table S are bridges, cold stores, crematorium, racecourse, marine lakes, parades, spa concert-rooms, estates, ferries, etc., etc.

So far we have seen the poor results of these "reproductive undertakings" upon the basis of the accounts as they stand. I referred just now to the amount of depreciation put apart. It was £193,274 on a capital of £121,170,000. See Table T.

THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN LOCAL EXPENDITURE, AND THE INCREASE SINCE 1890 IN THAT PART OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE WHICH WAS PAID OUT OF LOANS.



V.—THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF ALL LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, FOR EACH FIFTH YEAR, 1885–1900. DISTINGUISHING THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE THAT WAS PAID OUT OF LOANS (*striped part of each column*) AND THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE THAT WAS NOT PAID OUT OF LOANS (*white part of each column*). *See Table J.*

This amount set apart for depreciation of plant, machinery, etc., that has cost 121 millions, struck me at once as singularly inadequate; and, to throw more light upon this essentially important matter, I have computed the results shown in Table T. They are not a little astonishing.

For instance, in the waterworks business

TABLE O.—Comparing the Total Receipts of all Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales with the National Revenue of the United Kingdom. [*See Diagram* VIII.]

Year.	Total Receipts of all Local Spending Authorities in England and Wales.	Actual Receipts into the National Exchequer of the United Kingdom.*	Percentage Proportion of Local Receipts to National Revenue.	
			Local Receipts.	National Revenue.
	Millions of £	Millions of £	per cent.	per cent.
1874–1875	42·7	74·9	57	100
1879–1880	52·7	79·3	66	100
1884–1885	54·9	88·0	62	100
1889–1890	57·3	89·3	64	100
1894–1895	75·9	94·7	80	100
1899–1900	100·6	119·8	84	100

NOTE.—For the year 1900–1901, the Local Receipts were 111·9 millions, and the National Revenue was 130·4 millions. The Local Receipts were 86 per cent. of the National Revenue.

* These are the actual receipts into the National Exchequer of the United Kingdom, whereas the above Receipts of Local Spending Authorities relate only to England and Wales. If these local receipts included Scotland and Ireland, their amount would be still larger than here shown.

undertaken by these local Corporations, involving a capital of £56,940,000, we see that the yearly amount set apart for depreciation (and for renewal from time to time) of all this costly plant, with its wear and tear, is the ridiculous sum of 11½*d.* per £100 of capital. I point out that the yearly profit of 3*s.* 2*d.* per cent. (in Table S) on waterworks is based upon this ridiculous depreciation figure. Given anything like a fair depreciation amount, this profit of 3*s.* 2*d.* on waterworks at once vanishes and a substantial loss comes in its place.

And similarly with all the other "undertakings" in Table S which are stated to be worked at a profit. By the light of Table T we can see that the yearly amount set aside for depreciation is so grotesquely inadequate that the whole of the so-called "profit" in Tables R and S at once disappears in the eyes of any practical man, and a much greater loss comes in place of any profit. Ask an electrical engineer what he thinks of putting aside for depreciation 3*s.* 2½*d.* per year per £100 of capital, in respect of electrical machinery which has cost £12,510,000.

We see that no depreciation amount is put aside for burial-grounds, baths and washhouses, and working-class dwellings. It is very likely that burial-grounds do not suffer much from depreciation, but one would think it necessary to put aside a yearly sum for the two other businesses by way of depreciation. Note that twopence per £100 is set aside in respect of depreciation of markets, etc. The 10*s.* 4*d.* per £100 set aside for tramways is a remarkable advance on the other amounts for depreciation, but a slight bringing to mind of the ruinous wear and tear of a tramway and of its plant will show at once that this allowance for depreciation is simply childish.

This Table T knocks the bottom out of any notion that these so-called "reproductive undertakings" are carried on at a profit by local spending authorities. Here and there,

TABLE P.—A Summary Relating to the "Reproductive Undertakings" of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, Excluding London. CAPITAL: *Position at March 31st*, 1902.

1. The number of municipal Corporations in England and Wales (excluding London) carrying on one or more "reproductive undertakings" at March 31st, 1902, was	299
out of a total number of	317
2. And the number of "reproductive undertakings" by those 299 Corporations which were in operation at March 31st, 1902, was	1,029
3. Yielding an average of "reproductive undertakings," per Corporation undertaking them, of	3½
4. The total capital (inclusive of borrowed capital) provided by the 299 Corporations for the 1,029 undertakings was	Millions of £ 121·2
5. Of this total capital, the borrowed capital was	117·0
6. And of this borrowed capital, 117 millions, the amount which had been paid off, up to March 31st, 1902, was	16·2
7. Leaving, as capital borrowed, and not paid off at March 31st, 1902	100·8
8. The amount in sinking funds or loans funds on March 31st, 1902, applicable to the repayment of borrowed capital, was	4·6

no doubt, some of these businesses are worked at a profit. But we are dealing with them as a whole, in their various main groups, and it is abundantly clear that these "reproductive undertakings" are being worked, year by year, at a very considerable loss. The so-called profit in some of them is merely a nominal profit, which vanishes as soon as one makes anything like a proper allowance for depreciation.

It is difficult to imagine anything in the way of official accounts more farcical than the results exposed in Table T, the net result of which is that 3*s.* 2½*d.* is the amount of depreciation annually put aside per £100 of capital, in respect of plant, machinery, etc., which cost £121,170,000!

Here is a most moderate estimate of the real working-out of these 1,029 "reproductive undertakings," if we allow something like a proper amount annually for depreciation. What shall we allow?

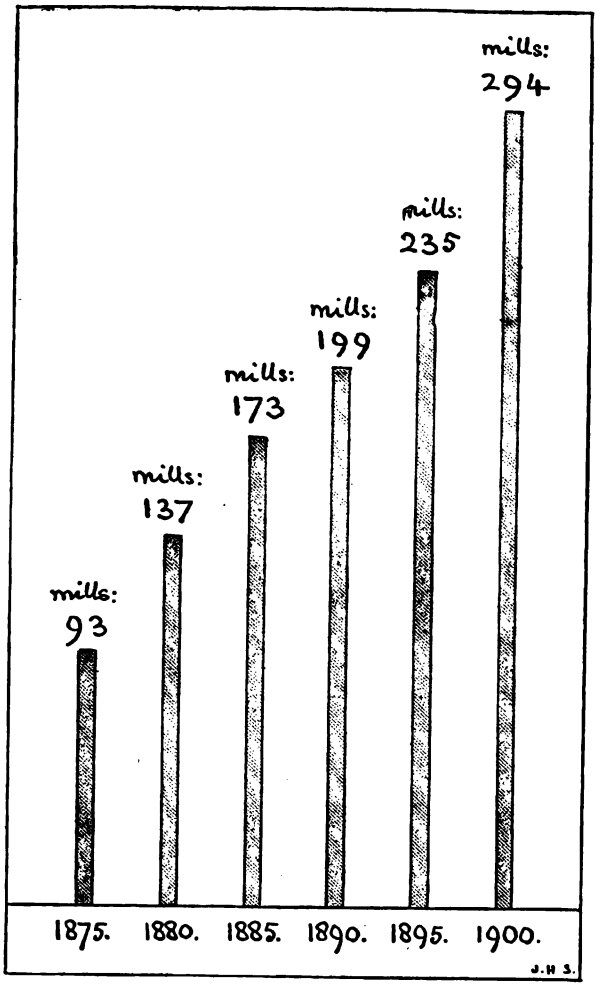
I suggest that, looking at the nature of the undertakings in Table T, and at the fact that by far the largest amounts of capital are invested in undertakings that involve great wear and tear to machinery, a yearly allowance of 5 per cent. on the capital invested would be a most moderate allowance. Upon this basis I proceed to rectify the nominal profit and loss account in Tables R and S, as follows:—

Capital Invested . . .	£121,170,000
5% on this for yearly depreciation is	6,058,500
Yearly allowance for Depreciation by Corporation (*see* Table T) is . . .	193,274
Extra for Depreciation which should be set aside yearly is	5,865,226
Deduct Net Profit stated by Corporation (*see* Table R), which now vanishes .	378,281
Making the Net Loss yearly upon the 1,029 "reproductive undertakings" .	£5,486,945

Thus, after making a most moderate yearly allowance for depreciation (see also Diagram XI.) in place of the ridiculously trivial amount set apart by Corporations for this purpose, we see that these 1,029 "reproductive undertakings" are being worked at a net yearly actual loss of £5,486,945, instead of at a net yearly (nominal) profit of £378,281. This means a net yearly loss in the actual working of these various trading concerns, undertaken by the local spending authorities of England and Wales (excluding London), of £4 10*s.* 7*d.* per cent. per annum—a figure that is, approximately, what *their profit* ought to be—instead of being a loss, if these 1,029 undertakings were properly conducted.

If we apply this correction for depreciation to each group of undertakings (see Table U), we find that every group is being worked at a serious loss yearly. The name "reproductive undertakings" means, in fact, that these undertakings are "reproductive"

THE HUGE INCREASE IN LOCAL DEBT.



VI.—THE OUTSTANDING DEBT OF ALL THE LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, FOR EACH FIFTH YEAR, 1875–1900. *See Table M.*

TABLE Q.—Another Summary Relating to the "Reproductive Undertakings" of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, Excluding London. *Yearly Income and Expenditure, and Yearly Profit or Loss.**

(*In continuation of* TABLE P.)

	Millions of £
1. The average yearly income from the 1,029 "reproductive undertakings," etc., *excluding deficiencies of income that were made good out of rates*, was	13·0
2. The average yearly working expenses of the 1,029 undertakings were	8·2
3. Leaving an average yearly excess of income over working expenses equal to	4·8
4. The average yearly amount paid in respect of principal and interest on borrowed capital was	4·2
5. While the average yearly amount set apart for depreciation of plant, machinery, etc., etc., etc., was only N.B.—This on a working capital of 121·2 millions!	0·2
6. The total of (4) and (5) is	4·4
7. And so, deducting (6) from (3), the balance, representing the average yearly net profit on a working capital of 121·2 millions, is Or, more exactly, £378,000.	0·4
8. Of the ten different groups of "reproductive undertakings," which, as one whole, produced this net profit of £378,000, five groups were worked at a total *profit* of £683,000, and five groups were worked at a total *loss* of £305,000, yielding a net profit, on the ten groups, of [as in (7)]	£378,000

NOTE.—The average yearly amount of general, legal, and establishment charges of Corporations, that were charged to these "Reproductive Undertakings," was £116,000 (included above).

* The yearly income, etc., is the average of the last four years.

TABLE R.—Showing the Various Descriptions of "Reproductive Undertakings," and the Average Yearly Profit or Loss on the working of each description. England and Wales. [*See Diagram* IX.]

(*These are the alleged Profits and Losses. See* TABLE U *for a correction.*)

Description of "Reproductive Undertakings" and the number of them.		Capital Invested in each class of "Reproductive Undertakings," at March 31st, 1902.	Average Yearly Net Profit or Loss.	
			Profit.	Loss.
Worked at a profit:—		Millions of £	£	£
Waterworks	193	56·94	90,128	—
Gasworks	97	24·03	394,825	—
Tramways	45	9·75	99,318	—
Markets, etc.	228	6·18	83,782	—
Other "reproductive undertakings"	16	0·72	15,373	—
Total	579	97·62	683,426	—
Worked at a loss:—				
Electricity supply	102	12·51	—	11,707
Harbours, piers, docks, and quays	43	5·42	—	77,724
Burial-grounds	143	2·38	—	63,784
Baths and washhouses	138	1·99	—	124,952
Working-class dwellings	24	1·25	—	26,978
Total	450	23·55	—	305,145
Grand total	1,029	121·17	378,281	—

NOTE.—The above Table relates to each group of undertakings. It does not necessarily follow that because waterworks, as one whole, yielded a profit, therefore every waterworks yielded a profit. Similarly, although electricity supply, as one whole, was worked at a loss, yet it is possible that one or more undertakings in this group were worked at a profit. The Table shows the net result for each group.

of debt and of loss, not reproductive of profit.

One thing remains to be shown in this long account of local taxation which I have submitted to the ratepayers of England and Wales. That is, the actual increase in the rates demanded of them by legalised but incompetent local spending authorities acting in various areas.

Table V shows the increase in local rates, per head of population, since 1875, in London and in the rest of England and Wales.

In London, the increase has been from £1 4*s.* 11*d.* per head of population in 1874–1875, to £2 12*s.* in 1900–1901.

An enormous increase, and this, bear in mind, after taking into account the growth of population.

In the Rest of England and Wales (excluding London) the increase has been from 14*s.* 8*d.* per head of population in 1874–1875, to £1 2*s.* 6*d.* in 1900–1901. A large increase, but not so large as in London.

For All England and Wales, as Table V shows, the increase has been from 16*s.* 2*d.* per head of population in 1874 – 1875, to £1 6*s.* 8*d.* in 1900–1901.

Moreover, in addition to these large increases in the rates, there was in 1901 a large local debt of £316,704,000, mainly incurred to work business undertakings which, as I have shown, are being worked at a net yearly loss of at least £4 10*s.* 7*d.* per £100 invested in them, thus menacing the future with still higher rates to make good deficiencies in the yearly working of these "reproductive undertakings."

Looking at the increase in local rates "in the £1" of property taxed, I find that in London these rates increased from 4*s.* 1½*d.* in the £1, in 1874–1875, to 6*s.* 2½*d.* in the £1 in 1900–1901.

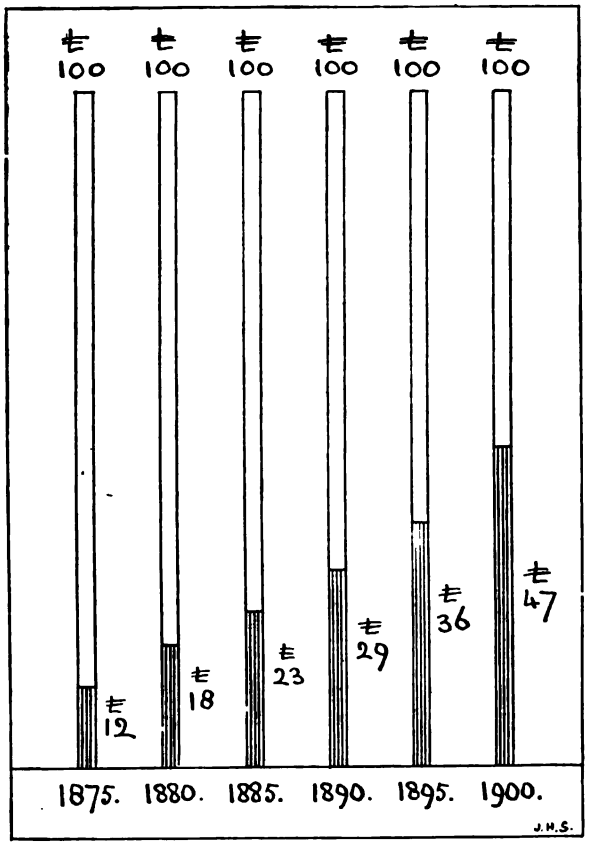
For the Rest of England and Wales, the increase was from 3*s.* 1¾*d.* in the £1, in 1874–1875, to 4*s.* 9½*d.* in the £1 in 1900–1901.

And for All England and Wales, the rates increased from 3*s.* 3¾*d.* in the £1, in 1874–1875, to 5*s.* 1½*d.* in the £1, in 1900–1901.

Note, in regard to these rates in the £1, that these large increases in local rates took place despite a very large increase in the rateable value of the property taxed.

In the Appendix, I give a summary, with notes, of the local rates during 1875–1900, in respect of each sort of local area in which the various spending authorities acted.

THE RAPID SUCCESS THAT IS ATTENDING THE EFFORTS OF THE LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES TO MAKE THE LOCAL DEBT RIVAL THE NATIONAL DEBT.



VII. — THE OUTSTANDING DEBT OF ALL LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, COMPARED WITH THE NATIONAL DEBT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, FOR EACH FIFTH YEAR, 1875–1900. THE NUMBER OF POUNDS OF LOCAL DEBT (*striped part of each column*) ARE COMPARED WITH EVERY £100 OF NATIONAL DEBT. *See Table N.*

I maintain that the facts now disclosed prove beyond doubt that the local spending authorities of this country are utterly incompetent, and that they ought not to have the power to raise 112 millions yearly.

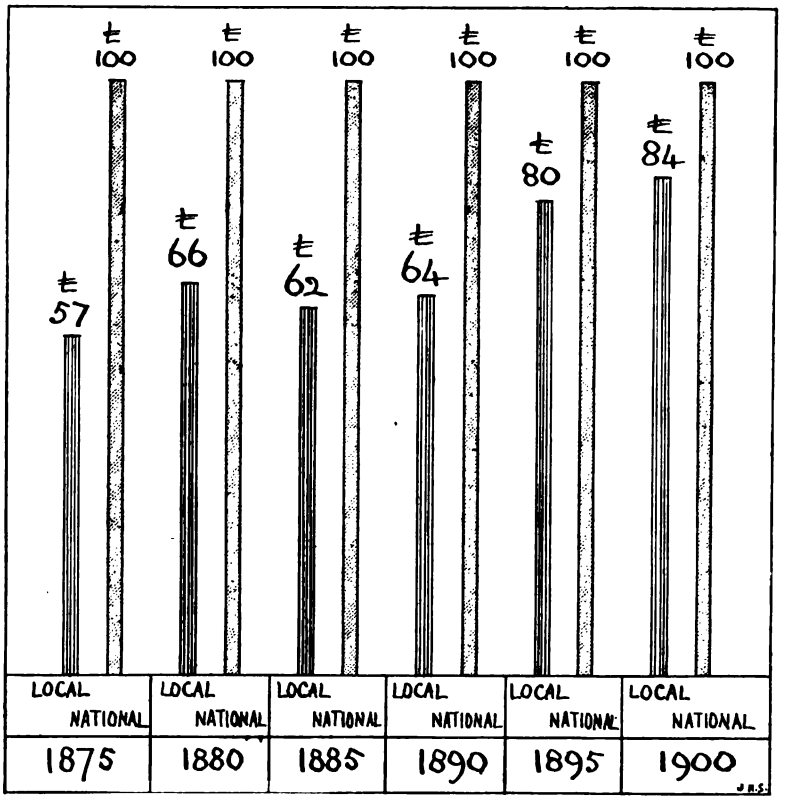
I have shown in Table U that the way in which the Corporations return

their accounts is wholly misleading, and that they put their yearly depreciation amount at a figure which is sheerly ridiculous, in order to be enabled to make out—on paper—a show of profit (miserable as it is) upon the various businesses they have undertaken.

The facts shown as to the continual piling up of debt, mainly for the purpose of working

What is the remedy for the condition of local finance now disclosed? Frankly, I do not know. It is now clear that there are many thousands of individual local spending authorities in this country who, for a reason not disclosed in the official returns, continually add to local taxation, preferring to pay their share of the increased taxation as individuals—a philanthropic

RECEIPTS FROM LOCAL TAXATION, ETC., ARE CATCHING UP THE RECEIPTS FROM NATIONAL TAXATION, ETC., ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL RECEIPTS HAVE GREATLY INCREASED.



VIII.—SHOWING THE LARGE INCREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE PROPORTION OF RECEIPTS BY ALL LOCAL SPENDING AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, TO THE RECEIPTS INTO THE NATIONAL EXCHEQUER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1875–1900. *See Table O.*

a vast number of business undertakings at a large yearly loss, is a most serious feature of local finance. It means, among other things, that the plant, machinery, etc., for which vast capital has been borrowed and spent, will be worked out in wear and tear long before the debt for it is paid off; and that other large debts will have to be contracted to make good the worn-out plant, etc., thus adding a second, or even a third, load of debt to local finance, before the original debt is paid off.

preference, indeed, and one that, by the light of the facts now shown, I heartily distrust. Meanwhile, these local spending authorities are seriously handicapping their own country in the fight it has to fight with its trade rivals, for the excessive local taxation handicaps business enterprise.

I should like to express warm appreciation of the admirable reports issued by the Local Government Board, etc., in connection with the subject of this present writing.

TABLE S.—Showing the Average Yearly Profit or Loss per £100 of Capital Invested in each Group of "Reproductive Undertakings."

(*See* TABLE U *for a correction of these rates of profit and loss.*)

Description of "Reproductive Undertakings."	Capital Invested.	Average Yearly Profit or Loss per £100 of Capital Invested.
		Per £100 of capital. PROFIT.
Worked at a profit:—	£	£ s. d.
Waterworks	56,940,000	0 8 2
Gasworks	24,030,000	1 12 10
Tramways—		
I. Owned and worked by the Corporations	8,610,000	0 19 0
II. Owned but *not* worked by the Corporations	1,140,000	1 10 6
Markets, etc.	6,180,000	1 7 1
Other "reproductive undertakings"	720,000	2 3 1
Total	97,620,000	0 14 0
Worked at a loss:—		LOSS.
Electricity supply	12,510,000	0 1 10
Harbours, piers, etc.	5,420,000	1 8 8
Burial-grounds	2,380,000	2 13 6
Baths and washhouses	1,990,000	6 5 9
Working-class dwellings	1,250,000	2 3 0
Total	23,550,000	1 5 11
		PROFIT.
Grand Total	121,170,000	0 6 3

APPENDIX.

SOME NOTES AS TO TABLE W, APPENDIX.

(1) METROPOLITAN AREAS:—

a. Poor Law Authorities. A large increase since 1885.

b. School Board for London. A large increase throughout, 1875–1900.

c. Metropolitan Board of Works. A large increase up to 1885—*i.e.*, as long as this authority existed.

d. County Authorities, etc. A decrease up to 1885; then ceased to exist.

e and *f*. London County Council. A small net decrease during 1890–1900. But the years shown chance to exclude years in which the rates were higher; and also, they take no account of the debt of 25½ millions incurred by the London County Council up to 1900.

g. Corporation of London. A decrease.

TABLE T.—Showing the absurdly inadequate amount annually set apart for Depreciation of the Plant, Machinery, etc., of the "Reproductive Undertakings," in which 121 millions have been invested by Municipal Corporations in England and Wales (excluding London). [*See Diagram* X.]

Description of "Reproductive Undertakings."	Capital Invested in each description of Undertaking. (*a*)	Average Yearly Amount set apart for Depreciation of the Plant, Machinery, etc., Represented by the Capital in (*a*). (*b*)	Percentage Proportion of (*b*) and (*a*) per £100 of Capital. Being the Yearly Amount set apart for Depreciation per £100 of Capital Value.
	£	£	*Per* £100 s. d.
Waterworks	56,940,000	27,266	0 11½
Gasworks	24,030,000	79,972	6 8
Electricity supply	12,510,000	19,970	3 2½
Tramways	9,750,000	50,307	10 4
Markets, etc.	6,180,000	500	0 2
Harbours, piers, etc.	5,420,000	4,499	1 8
Burial-grounds	2,380,000	nil	nil
Baths and washhouses	1,990,000	nil	nil
Working-class dwellings	1,250,000	nil	nil
Other "reproductive undertakings"	720,000	10,760	30 2
Total	121,170,000	193,274	3 2½

NOTE.—The average yearly amount set apart for depreciation, which, in ordinary businesses, is a substantial item, is here so trivial that the amount of depreciation per £100 of capital value has to be stated in pence and halfpence, instead of in pounds sterling!

TABLE U.—Showing the Yearly Loss on the Working of the 1,029 "Reproductive Undertakings," if a moderate amount is set apart for Depreciation of Plant, Machinery, Buildings, etc., in place of the ridiculously trivial amount set apart for Depreciation by Municipal Corporations (*see Table T*). England and Wales (excluding London).

Description of "Reproductive Undertakings."	Capital Invested.	Yearly Loss on Working, after setting apart for Depreciation five per cent. on Capital Invested.	
		Amount of Yearly Loss.	Percentage of Yearly Loss per £100 of Capital Invested.
	£	£	*Per* £100 £ s. d.
Waterworks	56,940,000	2,729,606	4 15 11
Gasworks	24,030,000	726,703	3 0 6
Electricity supply	12,510,000	617,237	4 18 8
Tramways	9,750,000	337,875	3 9 4
Markets, etc.	6,180,000	224,718	3 12 9
Harbours, piers, etc.	5,420,000	344,225	6 7 0
Burial-grounds	2,380,000	182,784	7 13 8
Baths and washhouses	1,990,000	224,452	11 5 7
Working-class dwellings	1,250,000	89,478	7 3 2
Other "reproductive undertakings"	720,000	9,867	1 7 5
Total	121,170,000	5,486,945	4 10 7

NOTE.—The above Losses should take the place of the alleged Profits and Losses stated in Tables R and S, which are arrived at by the process, adopted by municipal Corporations, of immensely understating the yearly amount that ought to be set apart for Depreciation, but which is not set apart by them.

h. Commissioners of Sewers. An increase since 1890.

i. Metropolitan District Boards. A large increase since 1890.

j. Metropolitan Police. No change during 1890–1900.

(2) EXTRA-METROPOLITAN BUT WHOLLY URBAN AREAS :—

Town Councils (Municipal Accounts).

a. County Boroughs. A large increase since 1890.

b. Other Boroughs. An increase since 1890.

Town Councils (other Accounts).

c. County Boroughs. A large increase since 1890.

d. Other Boroughs. A large increase since 1890.

e. Urban Sanitary Authorities, etc. A large increase throughout.

School Boards for Boroughs.

f. Boroughs in England. A large increase throughout.

g. Boroughs in Wales. A large increase throughout.

(3) PARTLY URBAN AND PARTLY RURAL AREAS :—

a. Poor Law Authorities. An increase since 1890.

School Boards.

b. Parishes in England. A large increase throughout.

c. Parishes in Wales. A large increase throughout.

TABLE V.—The Average Amount, per Head of Population, of All the Local Rates Raised. In every fifth year, beginning with the year 1874–1875, and distinguishing (1) London, (2) The Rest of England and Wales, and (3) All England and Wales.

Year.	London.	The Rest of England and Wales.	All England and Wales.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1874–1875	1 4 11	0 14 8	0 16 2
1879–1880	1 8 9	0 15 6	0 17 6
1884–1885	1 13 5	0 16 7	0 19 1
1889–1890	1 16 7	0 16 7	0 19 6
1894–1895	2 2 11	0 19 1	1 2 6
1899–1900	2 9 8	1 1 7	1 5 7
(and the last year known) 1900–1901	2 12 0	1 2 6	1 6 8

County Authorities.

d. County rates. No increase up to 1885; after then, taken over by County Councils.

e. Police rates. A decrease up to 1885; after then, taken over by County Councils.

County Councils.

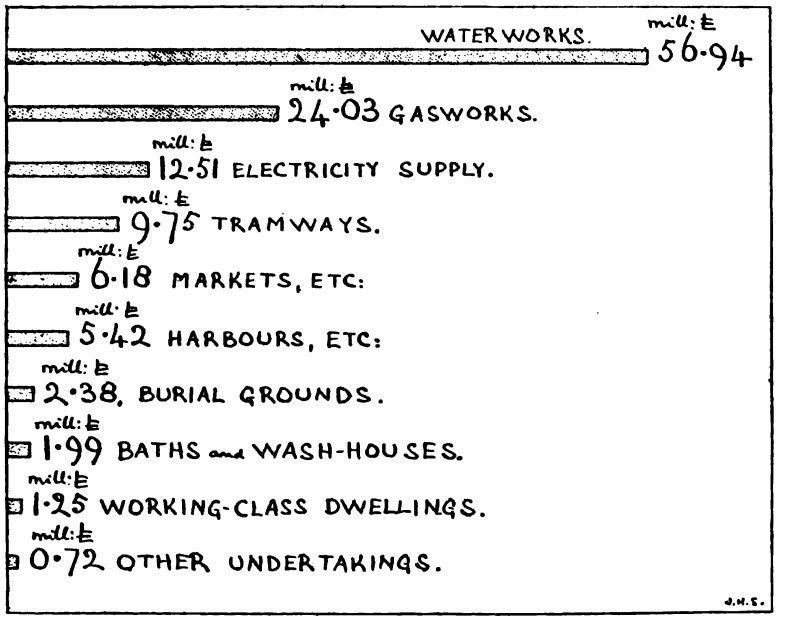
f. General county purposes. A large increase throughout.

g. Special county purposes. An increase throughout.

to the varied nature of the information contained in it, I have thought it well to show the various rates *as rates in the* £100, in place of rates in the £1 (the rates in the £1 are set out on the demand notices we receive from the rate-collectors), for the reason that the rates in the £1 go into various fractions of a penny, which are confusing, and which are avoided if the rates per £100 are shown.

In looking at Table W, it should be borne in mind generally that the rateable value of the property upon which all these rates were

SOME OF THESE UNDERTAKINGS ARE STATED BY MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS TO BE WORKED AT A PROFIT, AND SOME AT A LOSS. BUT AS THE AMOUNT SET APART BY CORPORATIONS FOR YEARLY DEPRECIATION OF PLANT, MACHINERY, BUILDINGS, ETC., IS MERELY TRIVIAL, ALL THESE UNDERTAKINGS ARE WORKED AT A YEARLY LOSS. *See Table U.*



IX.—"REPRODUCTIVE UNDERTAKINGS." SHOWING THE AMOUNT OF CAPITAL INVESTED IN EACH CLASS OF UNDERTAKINGS AT MARCH 31ST, 1902. ENGLAND AND WALES. *See Table R.*

(4) WHOLLY RURAL AREAS:—

Rural Sanitary Authorities, etc. (excluding Highway Accounts).

a. Special expenses. Only one year stated.

b. General expenses. A considerable increase since 1885.

c. Rural Sanitary Authorities, etc., in respect of Highways. Fluctuations, with a decreasing tendency, except in the last year shown.

d. Parish Councils. An increase.

As regards Table W, Appendix, which is necessarily detailed in its construction owing

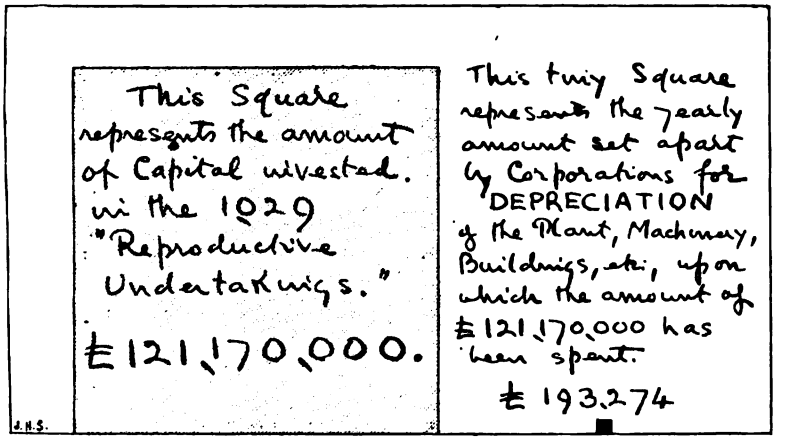
levied has greatly increased. And yet, despite this fact, the rates have, as a rule, largely increased. Moreover, no account is taken in Table W of the huge debt run up by local spending authorities, in addition to their receipts from rates. This debt amounted to 317 millions at the end of the year 1900–1901.

I specially direct attention to the two diagrams X. and XI. These make plain to the eye a most serious defect in municipal finance and in municipal accounts, the net result of which is to cause any plain man to distrust the whole working of "reproductive

TABLE W.—Showing the Average Rates in the £100 of the Rates raised for the purposes of the Principal Local Spending Authorities of England and Wales, in each fifth year beginning with the year 1874–1875. Distinguishing Spending Authorities who acted for Areas which were (1) Metropolitan Areas; (2) Extra-Metropolitan but wholly Urban Areas; (3) Partly Urban and Partly Rural Areas; and (4) Wholly Rural Areas.

Local Spending Authorities.	Year 1874–1875.	Year 1879–1880.	Year 1884–1885.	Year 1889–1890.	Year 1894–1895.	Year 1899–1900.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
(1) IN METROPOLITAN AREAS:—						
a. Poor Law Authorities	8 6 0	7 19 4	7 16 10	6 5 1	7 13 6	8 9 4
b. School Board for London	0 10 10	2 5 0	3 1 9	3 8 5	4 3 5	5 7 7
c. Metropolitan Board of Works	1 13 4	2 5 0	2 12 7	—	—	—
d. County Authorities for the Metropolitan parts of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent, united in 1889 to form the County of London	1 4 2	0 19 2	0 15 0	—	—	—
London County Council:—						
e. For General County Purposes	—	—	—	5 4 3	4 15 11	4 14 3
f. For Special County Purposes	—	—	—	0 15 10	0 19 2	0 16 8
g. Corporation of London	2 10 11	2 1 9	2 1 9	2 8 5	2 2 7	10 13 6
h. Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London	6 13 5	7 2 8	5 19 3	5 12 7	6 10 1	
i. Metropolitan District Boards and Vestries of Parishes			6 7 7	6 7 7	7 11 9	7 18 6
j. Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District	2 3 4	1 19 2	2 2 6	2 1 9	2 1 9	2 1 9
(2) IN EXTRA-METROPOLITAN BUT WHOLLY URBAN AREAS:—						
Town Councils (Municipal Accounts)—						
a. County Boroughs	4 11 9	3 15 11	3 6 9	3 7 7	3 15 11	4 10 11
b. Other Boroughs				2 13 5	2 15 0	2 16 9
Town Councils (Other Accounts):—						
c. County Boroughs	—	8 11 10	11 5 2	11 19 4	14 7 9	15 2 9
d. Other Boroughs				12 1 0	13 10 3	14 17 9
e. Urban Sanitary Authorities and Urban District Councils other than Town Councils	—	9 1 10	10 16 0	11 10 2	13 5 3	15 6 1
School Boards for Boroughs—						
f. Boroughs in England	0 17 6	1 11 9	2 3 4	2 11 8	3 5 1	4 4 8
g. Boroughs in Wales	1 1 8	1 15 0	2 15 11	2 15 11	3 2 7	4 5 11
(3) IN PARTLY URBAN AND PARTLY RURAL AREAS:—						
a. Poor Law Authorities	6 12 7	5 11 9	5 8 5	4 17 7	4 16 9	5 5 11
School Boards for Districts other than Boroughs—						
b. Parishes in England not included in Boroughs	1 6 8	2 9 2	2 10 11	2 15 11	3 6 9	4 0 11
c. Parishes in Wales not included in Boroughs	1 5 0	2 10 11	3 0 0	3 5 1	3 17 9	4 15 11
County Authorities—						
d. County Rates	1 1 8	0 19 2	1 1 8	—	—	—
e. Police Rates	0 17 6	0 15 0	0 15 0	—	—	—
County Councils—						
f. General County Purposes	—	—	—	1 5 7	1 14 6	1 17 3
g. Special County Purposes	—	—	—	0 16 2	0 18 3	0 19 4
(4) IN WHOLLY RURAL AREAS:—						
Rural Sanitary Authorities and Rural District Councils (excluding accounts in respect of Highways)—						
a. Special Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	2 12 6
b. General Expenses	0 5 0	0 3 4	0 5 0	0 5 10	0 9 2	
c. Rural Sanitary Authorities and Rural District Councils (accounts in respect of Highways) and other Highway Authorities in Rural Districts	2 15 11	3 3 5	2 17 6	2 13 5	2 14 8	4 6 9
d. Parish Councils and Parish Meetings	—	—	—	—	0 2 6	0 5 10

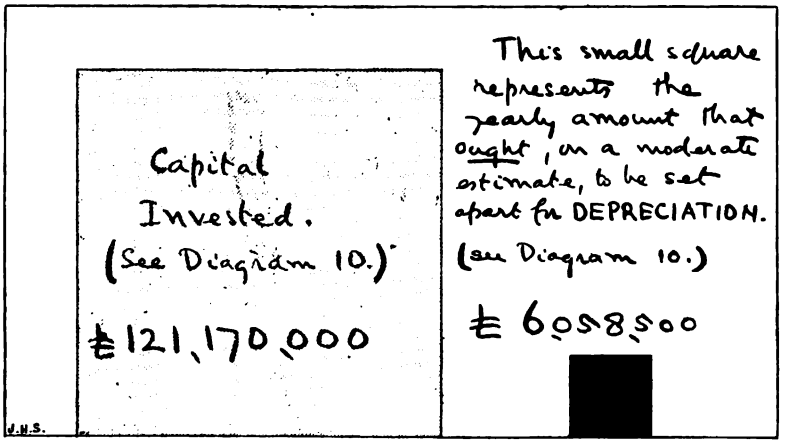
OBSERVE THE UTTER INADEQUACY OF THE YEARLY AMOUNT SET APART FOR DEPRECIATION BY MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS UPON A CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OF £121,170,000. *See Diagram XI.*



X.—CONTRASTING THE HUGE AMOUNT SPENT UPON THE 1029 "REPRODUCTIVE UNDERTAKINGS" BY MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, WITH THE RIDICULOUSLY TRIVIAL AMOUNT SET APART YEARLY TO MAKE GOOD THE DEPRECIATION OF THE PLANT, MACHINERY, BUILDINGS, ETC., UPON WHICH 121 MILLIONS HAVE BEEN SPENT. (THE BIG SQUARE IS 627 TIMES AS LARGE AS THE TINY SQUARE.) *See Table T.*

enterprises" undertaken by the local spending authorities of England and Wales. This gross understatement of the amount that ought to be set aside for depreciation of plant, machinery, etc., may not be an offence in the eye of the law, but it does not impress us with a belief in the honest dealing of spending authorities—who spend 112 millions yearly. If these authorities can thus attempt to blind the public in that part of their accounts which relates to the businesses run by them, there is, at the least, ground for suspecting that municipal accounts in other respects are not fairly handled. I do not know who does audit these accounts, and I speak, of course, without reference to any individuals. I suggest that these accounts cannot possibly be subjected to an efficient and independent audit, and that the spending authorities who are responsible for spending 112 millions yearly are also responsible, to some extent, for the misleading results shown by their accounts, which have now been exposed. I am aware that the absurdly trivial amount set aside for depreciation by corporations is sometimes defended by official and other persons attached to, or in favour of, municipal trading, on the score that the sinking fund principle is alleged to provide for depreciation. But this is a wholly mistaken notion. A sinking fund does, as I have explained, provide for the gradual paying-off of the particular liability to which it relates, but it does not provide for the loss by depreciation of plant, etc. And, as I have stated, the official accounts show that these municipal enterprises have already involved a charge upon the rates. Only the other day, at a meeting of the London County Council, it was stated, quite as a matter of course, that the new steamboat service on the Thames may add to the rates.

COMPARE THIS WITH DIAGRAM X.



XI.—THIS DIAGRAM SHOULD BE COMPARED WITH NO. X. IT SHOWS THE YEARLY AMOUNT THAT OUGHT, IN A MODERATE ESTIMATE, TO BE SET APART FOR DEPRECIATION, IN PLACE OF THE TRIVIAL AMOUNT SET APART BY MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE DEPRECIATION OF THEIR "REPRODUCTIVE UNDERTAKINGS."

THE LITTLE GREY LADY.

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.*

STOURTON forgot at once the gloomy, half-lit appearance of the house, the cold, uninhabited air of the hall and passages, the sombre bearing of the solitary manservant who had ushered him in. This grey-headed old lady, with the delightful face and quaint air of having stepped out of some mediæval picture, but whose unfortunate deformity was only too apparent, charmed him at first sight. She sat in a great chair before a fire heaped with logs of wood, whose pleasant heat seemed to strike a reassuring note after the draughts and general chilliness through which he had passed. Her smile of welcome lent her features a sweetness which was more than sufficient compensation for those misshapen shoulders. A cloud of vague misgivings vanished as he bent over her outstretched hands.

"It is Mr. Ronald Stourton, I am sure!" she murmured. "You've done me so great a kindness that I scarcely know how to welcome you."

He laughed good-humouredly and began to unfasten his travelling coat.

"You expected me, then?"

"Max, my nephew, telegraphed that you would bring me the letter. I cannot tell you how important it is to me, how thankful I am to you."

He produced a long, leather case, and taking a letter from it, carefully replaced the portfolio in his pocket.

"It is a very small matter, this, for gratitude," he said. "Only I am afraid that I must ask you to excuse my remaining here, even for a moment. Technically I believe that I am guilty of a misdemeanour in paying even this hurried call. I have to be in Downing Street as quickly as possible."

She poured out a cup of coffee from an arrangement of wonderful appearance which stood by her side.

"Do not stay for a moment longer than you wish," she murmured: "but you must positively have something to warm you before you go. I am sure that you are cold. I know what crossing is like in such weather. Ah! I see that you are smiling at my machine. Well, coffee is one of my hobbies. I always make it myself, and my friends are so good-natured as to pretend that they like it. You must give me your honest opinion. Will you pardon me if I just glance through this letter? There is a question, then, which I want to ask you about Max."

He accepted the cup of coffee, as he would have accepted almost anything from such a delightful old lady. He sipped it first. It was strong and of a delicious flavour. He drank it off and set down the cup. Suddenly, as he stood upright again, a queer giddiness assailed him. His hand went up to his head and he staggered back. The floor rose beneath his feet. Strange sounds throbbed in his ears. He clutched at the air with outstretched hands. He tried in vain to drag his limbs towards the door.

"Good Heavens!" he cried. "Let me out! I am ill! Let me out! Send—for a cab! Eighteen—Downing Street!"

He collapsed and lay stretched upon the floor. The little old lady sat and watched him over the top of her letter. The smile which parted her lips now was of altogether another order.

* * * * *

"For your muscles," the girl said, looking up at his averted face with a quiet smile, "I must always entertain a most profound respect. But as for your manners, I think that they are abominable!"

The man was a little startled. He looked at her quickly, and meeting the laughter in her eyes, drew himself up stiffly.

"I am sorry if I have given offence," he said. "May I ask in what way I have laid myself open to such a rebuke?"

She leaned a little forward, as though to look into his face, but his broad-brimmed hat was pulled well over his forehead, and his profile was as expressionless as though carved out of stone. She raised her eyebrows

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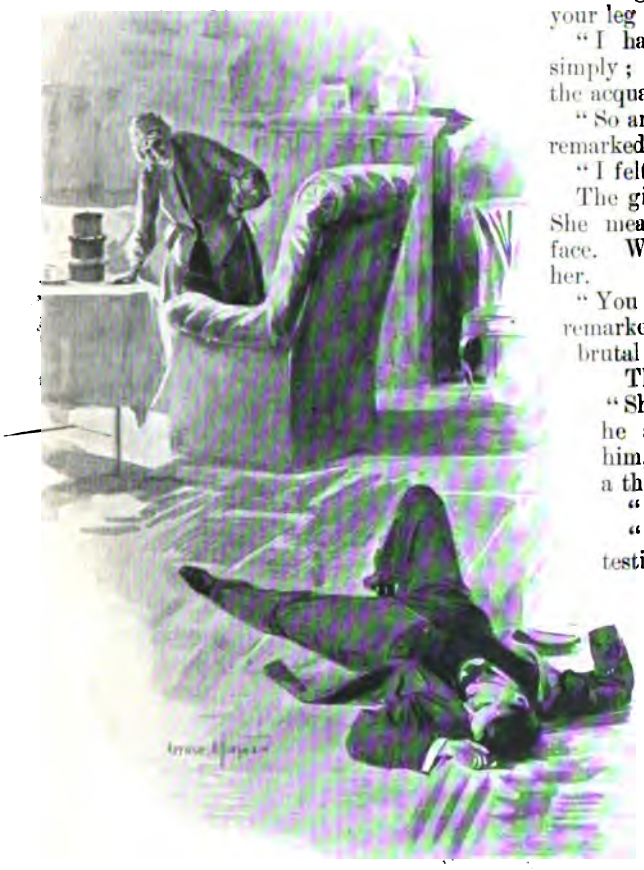
in humorous self-expostulation. The man was impossible, but so tantalising.

"Well," she said, "your first appearance upon the scene was opportune enough. I came round the corner running for my life, and after me the tramp. I was so overjoyed



"He collapsed and lay stretched upon the floor."

to see you that I forgot to look where I was going, caught my foot in the root of a tree, or something horrid, and over I went."

"I trust," he said, "that you are not going to attribute your sprained ankle to my appearance."

"Don't be foolish!" she answered. "It is your manners I am attacking now. There I lay stretched upon the ground—a pretty object I must have looked—waiting for someone to help me up, and you, well, you ignored me in favour of the tramp. It was detestable!"

He bit his lip—it might have been to check a smile.

"I had an idea," he said, "that you were in no hurry. The tramp was!"

"In no hurry!" she repeated. "Heavens! have you ever tried lying on your face, with half of you in a furze bush, your skirts all disarranged, and no positive assurance that your leg wasn't broken?"

"I have never tried it," he answered simply; "but I was very anxious to make the acquaintance of your tramp."

"So anxious that you ignored me!" she remarked.

"I felt," he said, "that you would wait."

The girl leaned right forward this time. She meant to look into her companion's face. What she saw to some extent satisfied her.

"You took a great deal for granted," she remarked. "And I think you were very brutal to the tramp."

The man's lip curled slightly.

"Shall I go back and apologise?" he asked. "As for being brutal to him, that is nonsense. He deserved a thrashing, and he got it."

"And I had to pick myself up!"

"My dear young lady," he exclaimed testily, "the other affair was more important."

The girl frowned slightly. After all, there was something of the boor about this man.

"My name," she said, "is Esther Stanmore. My father will wish to add his thanks to mine. Will you let me know your name, and where he will find you when he returns?"

Then the man really smiled. He seemed for the first time to find a grim humour in the situation.

"My name is John Paulton," he said. "I am a friend of your father's gamekeeper, Heggs, and he has lent me his cottage for the summer. I believe your father has taken him up to Scotland for a few months."

If he had expected to surprise her, he was disappointed. She accepted his information as the most natural in the world.

"I remember hearing about your coming, Mr. Paulton," she said, "and I have seen you in the woods. I am ever so grateful to

you, of course, but I wish you would notice that I am limping."

He slackened his pace at once.

"I am very sorry," he said. "Is there anything I can do to relieve you? Will you rest here while I go up to the house for a pony?"

"How can you think of such a thing," she exclaimed, "after the fright I have had?"

"Then I really don't see——" he began.

"You might offer me your arm," she suggested. "I don't think that I can walk any further alone."

He did as she asked in silence. She leaned heavily upon him, and they moved slowly along the path. He seemed determined not to encourage any conversation. She, however, was of another mind.

"Are you quite alone in Heggs's cottage?" she asked.

"I have a friend with me," he answered.

"A dark, clean-shaven man, rather pale?" she inquired.

"Yes."

"He was standing at the gate when I came by," she remarked.

He frowned.

"And I recognised him," she continued.

"Indeed!"

"He used to be my cousin's servant," she remarked. "The best man he ever had, I have heard him say."

He bit his lip.

"It is quite probable," he answered shortly. "I believe that he used to be in service, before — before he saved some money."

They emerged from the wood. The footpath which crossed the field in front of them led past a cottage built of grey stone, and with an ancient, red-tiled roof. A man was leaning over the gate, smoking a pipe. Directly he saw them, he thrust the pipe in his pocket and disappeared. The girl smiled.

"Your friend," she remarked, "is shy."

The man muttered something underneath his breath. The girl's smile deepened. She pointed to the cottage.

"I shall not try to walk any further," she said. "I am going to beg the hospitality of your porch. Do you think that if we asked your friend very nicely, he would go up to the Hall for me, and tell them to send a groom down with a pony and a side-saddle?"

He opened the gate and motioned her to enter, with a gesture of grave politeness.

"I will find you a chair," he said, "and then, if you will permit me, I will go myself to the Hall."

His anxiety to escape was a little too obvious. She answered him coldly.

"That must be altogether as you wish," she declared. "I am only sorry to give you so much trouble. If my foot were not very painful, I would struggle on somehow or other; but I am sure that I could not manage the stiles."

"If you will excuse me for a moment," he answered, "I will fetch you a chair. There is not the slightest necessity for you to walk any further."

She heard his voice inside—quick, imperative, alert, the other man's smooth and respectfully acquiescent. The girl smiled to herself. This was so like the conversation of two friends! Did he really think that she was to be so easily hoodwinked?

Presently he came out, carrying a chair, which he placed carefully in a corner of the tiny lawn overgrown with wild flowers.

"You will excuse my not asking you in," he said shortly. "The rooms are small and stuffy. It is much pleasanter out here."

"I have no wish at all," she answered stiffly, "to intrude upon your hospitality. Thanks very much for the chair, though."

"Is there anything I can do for your—ankle?" he asked uncomfortably. "Would you like some—er—some hot water?"

She looked down at her foot gravely.

"You might feel whether it seems to you very much swollen," she answered, lifting it a few inches from the ground.

He stooped down and took it carefully into his hand. It was a long, slender foot, very soundly but daintily shod, and there was a faint silken rustle as she moved it carefully backwards and forwards. He held it for a moment very lightly—perhaps for a little more than a moment. Then he rose abruptly to his feet.

"I cannot feel any swelling at all," he announced.

She was much relieved.

"I dare say, then, that it is nothing serious," she declared cheerfully. "I am so glad. If there is anything I detest, it is having to stay indoors."

"It is certainly tedious," he admitted. "I do not think that you need fear anything of the sort in this case, though."

"I am so fond of walking—in the woods," she murmured.

Left rather abruptly alone, the girl found herself confronted with a moral problem. Mr. John Paulton, as he had called himself,

had excited her curiosity. The means of gratifying it were close at hand. Was she justified in using them? The man inside the cottage was, of course, his servant. He had stayed once at the Hall with her cousin, and would doubtless answer any of her questions. It was not, she admitted to herself reluctantly, a nice thing to do; but, on the other hand, Heggs had no right to lend his cottage to mysterious strangers who might be hiding from their creditors, or from even worse things. It was inconsiderate of Heggs, especially as she was alone at the Hall. She decided that she had the right to investigate the matter thoroughly. And of course she did nothing of the sort. Even when the man came out a few minutes later to once more offer her some tea, she let him go without a single question. It was not possible.

"'I have no wish at all,' she answered stiffly, 'to intrude upon your hospitality.'"

He was back again in less than half an hour, followed by the groom with a pony. He helped her into the saddle and stood bareheaded to see her go.

"I feel," she said, looking down at him with a very expressive light in her soft, grey eyes, "that I haven't thanked you half enough."

"Please do not think any more of such a trifle," he protested. "Your gamekeeper would have done all that I did just as effectually."

"But my gamekeeper was not there," she objected.

"It was my good fortune," he answered gravely. "Nothing more."

She gathered up the reins and smiled down at him. The men whom Esther Stanmore smiled upon seldom forgot it.

"I shall have to confine my afternoon walks to the home woods," she remarked. "They are just as pretty, really. Good afternoon, Mr. Paulton. We are such close neighbours that we are certain to come across one another again soon, I hope."

But Paulton, though he bowed, did not echo her wish.

* * *

And yet in less than three weeks they had reached the end, the last barrier through which one looks into Paradise. They were seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, the sunshine distorted into queer, zigzag stripes and gleams playing away from their feet into the heart of the silent wood. A squirrel had just scampered across the path. From the hidden places beyond, a pigeon was calling softly to his mate, a woodpecker was busy amongst the branches of a beech-tree, and all the while the west wind sang in the rustling canopy above their heads. They alone of all the living things were silent.

"I think," he said, at last, "that up to

now I have dreamed, not lived. The commencement of life is here."

She looked at him a little wonderingly.

"You are losing your sense of proportion," she remarked, smiling. "It is here, if you will, that one may dream of life and be happy. Yet it can be nothing save an interlude. Life is not in these woods—no, not the commencement or the end of life. It is the Paradise of dumb beasts, this. We, alas! have to seek for our Paradise in different places."

"A month ago," he said slowly, keeping his eye fixed upon the ground, "I should have needed no one to have told me where Paradise lay. If I were the Ronald Stourton of a month ago, I should not hesitate for a single second to grasp it—now."

"Ronald Stourton!" she repeated softly. "So you are Ronald Stourton!"

"Yes," he answered. "I have heard you speak of my people."

"I thought you were in Paris."

"I was. I came to England on an important mission from the chief to the Prime Minister a month ago. I bungled it hopelessly. I was taken in by a trick which should not have deceived a child. There isn't any particular secret about it now. I brought across a draft of the proposed understanding between France and England as to their neutrality in the Russo-Japanese war. The draft was stolen from me by an agent of the Russian Government or by someone who means to dispose of it to the Russian Government. I am suspended for the present. Immediately the draft is transferred to the Russian Ambassador, and the thing comes out, I shall be dismissed the service."

She looked at him—as a woman knows how to look at such times. Her hand rested lightly upon his shoulder.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she said softly. "I felt all the time that you were in trouble. But can nothing be done? Can't the person be found who stole the paper?"

"The cleverest detective in England has the matter in hand," he answered, "and it was at his particular request that I disappeared. The person whom he strongly suspects is being watched day and night, and it is supposed that he has not yet had an opportunity of disposing of the papers. That is why I am still merely on leave. It is a sickening story, but I am glad that you know the truth. You will understand now why I must go away."

"I understand nothing of the sort," she answered decisively. "Of course, it is shocking bad luck; but even if you have to give up your profession, there is plenty of other work in the world for a man, isn't there? How old are you?"

He smiled. He thought her manner charming, but it was certainly original.

"I am thirty-four next birthday. Too old, you see, for any of the services. I might go abroad, of course; but it is a far cry from diplomacy to ranching."

She looked at him thoughtfully.

"You are well off, aren't you?" she remarked. "Most of your family are."

"Yes," he answered drily, "I am well off. I am spared the luxury of having to work for a living, at any rate. But I am a sorry idler."

"Quite right!" she assented. "I detest men who do nothing. It always ends in their dabbling in things which they don't understand at all."

He groaned.

"Don't!" he begged, digging his stick savagely into the ground. "I can see myself—a J.P., perhaps a county councillor, a director of City companies—Heaven knows what!"

"Aren't you a little premature?" she said, smiling. "You are not sure yet that you have finished with diplomacy."

"I am perfectly certain that diplomacy has finished with me," he answered ruefully. "Pardon me!"

He picked up the letter which had slipped from her waistband and handed it to her. His eyes by chance fell upon the address, and he started.

"Miss de Poulgasky!" he repeated. "Forgive me, but I could not help seeing. It seems strange to see that name here."

She nodded sympathetically.

"It is her father, of course, to whom those papers will be sent," she remarked. "I was at school with Corona, and we write to one another now and then. My uncle, who came down last night, seems very friendly with them. This letter is really from him. And that reminds me. I am no longer without a chaperon. I want you to come and dine with us to-night."

He shook his head.

"Don't ask me! I am not in a fit humour to meet people."

"There is only my uncle, and I think that perhaps he may amuse you. He is such a thorough cosmopolitan. I believe that he is equally at home in every capital of Europe, and he has the most marvellous collection of anecdotes. Come and dine, and afterwards I will show you my rose-garden."

"What followed was probably the most amazing thing Esther had ever witnessed."

"If you will——" Their heads came very close together. He seemed to have a good deal to say, and she was very well content to listen. In the end he forgot for a brief space of time all his troubles. And she forgot to post her letter.

* * * * *

He was watching the sunset from the terrace. Behind him was the empty drawing-room. He had arrived, after all, a little early; eight o'clock was only just striking by the stable clock. She could scarcely be down yet. He had left her barely an hour ago, and he was in no humour for a *tête-à-tête* with this wonderful uncle. So he leaned over the worn, grey balustrade and wondered which way the rose-garden might lie. Were other men so much the sport of Fate as this, he asked himself bitterly, that the greatest joy of life should shine down upon him whose feet were fast set in the quagmires—a tantalising dream — an impossible — yes, an impossible——?

Then the chain of his thoughts was snapped. Every pulse of his body seemed to cease beating. He was listening. Behind, in the drawing-room, someone was talking to Esther, and the voice—what folly! He turned slowly round as one who expects to confront a ghost. Esther was standing in the window, and by her side a smooth, clean-shaven old gentleman in glasses, who smiled benevolently upon him and went on talking. What folly! He dragged himself to meet them. He was ill at ease, scarcely conscious of where he was. But he watched Esther's uncle. His manner was certainly queer, but he watched. He saw things which sent the blood rushing through his veins at fever heat.

Dinner was served at a small, round table drawn close up to the open window. The Stanmore cook was famous, and Esther's uncle had had a word or two with the butler about the wines. Nevertheless, it was an ill-balanced trio, and Stourton especially was talking all the time at random. Mr. Heslop Stanmore was quietly entertaining, but Esther was too worried at her guest's strange demeanour to find much pleasure in her uncle's conversation. She made several attempts to establish more natural relations between the two men, but without the least success. She felt all the time that there was nothing they both of them desired so much as her absence. At last she got up and left them.

"I shall give you a quarter of an hour, no more," she said, glancing at Stourton. "You can smoke where you choose here."

The butler with great care set the Château Yguem and port upon the table and withdrew. Then Mr. Heslop Stanmore leaned back in his chair and laughed softly.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed, "you have my sympathy. You have indeed. All the time you have been getting surer and surer, longing to get up and take me by the throat; and instead you have had to swallow your dinner and make polite speeches. Come, you can relieve yourself now. All your suspicions are correct. I am the little, hunchbacked lady of Hyde Park Terrace. I stole those papers—it is my profession, you see. I am very sorry indeed to have inconvenienced you; but one must live, and I am a younger son."

"Where are they?" Stourton asked between his teeth.

Mr. Heslop Stanmore shrugged his shoulders.

"My young friend," he said, "I am thankful that you did not ask me that question a few hours ago, or I might have been compelled to have resorted to subterfuge. I have had the utmost difficulty—by the by, you really ought to try this Château Yguem. No?—the utmost difficulty in disposing of them. I have been watched day and night, and so has Poulgasky's house. However, I have managed it at last. My niece Esther, with whom, by the by, you seem to be on remarkably good terms, is an old school-friend of Corona Poulgasky's, and I got her to enclose my papers this morning in a letter to her. The post went out, I believe," he continued, raising his wineglass and looking critically at its contents, "at four o'clock. A delivery is made in London to-night. It is just a question—rather a near thing, I should imagine—whether those papers are not already in Poulgasky's hands."

"Did Es—Miss Stanmore know what she was doing?" Stourton groaned.

"My dear fellow," her uncle remonstrated, "do you think that I should dare to give away my secrets to a child? She has not the slightest idea!"

Esther stepped suddenly in through the window. Her forehead was slightly wrinkled. She held something in her hand.

"My dear uncle, will you ever forgive me?" she exclaimed. "I started for the post, but I forgot all about my letter."

What followed was probably the most amazing thing Esther had ever witnessed. Her uncle made a spring for the letter which she held in her hand, only to find himself caught by the throat and flung back into his chair. Stourton stood over him, grim and threatening. Just in time he saw the glint of steel. The revolver fell harmlessly upon the floor; a strong hand held him like a vice. Then Ronald turned to the girl.

"Esther," he said, "will you give me that letter?"

She was very pale, but she did not hesitate for a moment.

"I do not understand why," she answered; "but if you ask for it, of course I will."

Mr. Heslop Stanmore, with Stourton's knuckles very near his throat, did not find speech easy. But he said one word!

* * * * *

They opened his wedding present a little dubiously. It was a copy of Harrison's "First Steps in Diplomacy." They looked at one another and laughed.

"I am afraid," she said, wiping the tears from her eyes, "that my uncle is a very black sheep, but he certainly has a sense of humour."

Stourton put the book carefully on one side.

"We will treasure this volume," he remarked. "Some day, when your uncle has a birthday, I will send him a little textbook I have on the art of 'Making Up.'"

THE HELIOGRAPH.

BESIEGED and walled they watch her there;
Escape there must and shall not be.
But from those bastions debonair
There breaks and swings a sign to me.

From her far eyes, across the foe,
I see the mystic message start,
And read the sign they cannot know—
The heart that heliographs to heart!

ARTHUR STRINGER.

IF YOUTH BUT KNEW.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

II.—ROSES OF TRIANON.

STEVEN LEE, Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg—Englishman by education and in virtue of maternal heritage; Austrian subject by paternal descendance and tenure of Silesian lands—a young man of usually fastidious and epicurean tastes, chose to linger for some reason (incomprehensible to his valet) in God-forsaken, out-of-the-way corners of Westphalia, this April in the year of wars 1813. Instead of making for the gay capital of King Jerome and enjoying himself "like a gentleman," he hung about the outskirts of the Thuringian Forest and haunted the inns of half-deserted townships, poverty-stricken villages on the high Imperial road.

While the postilions and the above-mentioned valet cursed the thin wine and the gross fare, while the horses of the travelling-chaise fretted the hours away in unworthy stables, their lord and master took solitary rambles on foot, as if in search of no one knew what, only to return, haughty as usual, weary and discontented.

When a halt was ordered for the night in the hamlet of Wellenshausen, instead of pushing on to the decent town of Halberstadt, valet Franz felt the situation more than his lively Viennese spirit could endure and vowed he would resign.

He tapped his forehead significantly as the Count strolled out of the vine-grown guest-house into the street, looking up and down in his singular, expectant fashion.

"'Tis question of a maiden," said postilion Peter, grimacing over his mug, "or else the devil's in it."

Further than this their diagnosis of the master's state of mind could not go.

* * * * *

Albeit on the skirt of the low lands the village was yet of the mountain; riding, so to speak, a bold buttress of the distant wooded range, and sheltered to the north by an imposing crag, that rose, pinnacle-like and so detached and huge that it would have seemed inaccessible but for the stronghouse on its summit. From the flank of this mount a torrent of black waters, strangely cold at all times, born in some mysterious and dreaded cavern of the rocks, rushed foaming brown and, noisily, cut the village in two on its way to the plain.

Steven Lee gazed upwards at the Burg, frowning of aspect at most times, but just now, as it caught the rays of a sinking sun on its narrow windows, shining rosily into the valleys; his fancy was wafted up to the height on a wing of airy romance, when a clamour of children's voices turned his attention in a new direction.

A string of ragged urchins was rushing towards the torrent. Over the bridge a man's figure was approaching at a swinging pace. It stopped for a moment on the summit of the rough stone arch, and the notes of a fiddle, in lively measure, rose above the children's shouts and the roar of the waters. Dancing, singing, leaping, catching at his coat-tails, they surrounded the musician and followed him. He advanced like the magic piper of the legend.

Steven stood still in the middle of the way; a gleam was in his eye, the sunset radiance on his smiling face.

The player came up to him and greeted him with a bow, his fiddle still at his chin the while he finished his measure.

"We have met before," said he.

"And I well-nigh despaired of our meeting again," returned the Count with some show of emotion. "Your music has been running in my head—implacably—all these days. I think you must have bewitched me."

There was a note almost of reproach in his voice; and yet he blushed, as he spoke, as if ashamed of his own affability to a wandering musician.

"Why," said the other cruelly, "I fear

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you're but a dull lad. Great Apollo—could we change places, I would need no old man's company! Nay, now, children, let a gentleman speak to a gentleman——" He paused in a moment's meditation, looked through the inn gateway, then glanced up swiftly at the distant towering strong-house. "Is it possible your Lordship has chosen this barren village for a stage? I see your horses being unharnessed yonder. Will you bid me to supper . . . . comrade?"

He looped his threadbare sleeve into Steven's fine broadcloth. The urchins shouted with laughter.

The young Count frowned, started: then, with sudden sweetness, submitted.

Presently he sat (to the respectful astonishment of the host of the "Silver Stork") in the dim inn room, facing his guest. The fiddler was a strange-looking man nearing the half-century of life, thin and erect of figure, clear-cut of feature; in attire distinctive through all its poverty: knee-breeches of homespun, brass-buckled shoes, coarse linen shirt-collar open at the sinewy throat, and tangled silver grey hair tied up in the queue of twenty years syne; sadly poor to all appearance, though not without some quality of hidden refinement. A man with deep-set, wide eyes, melancholy and dreamy when they were not fiercely mocking. Count Kilmansegg, in fact, and not without a sense of embarrassment, was entertaining the wandering rogue of a musician known to the countryside as Fiddle-Hans.

"Sidonia leaned eagerly out across her aunt's shoulder."

"Well, sir," the fiddler said, "I cannot congratulate you! The bread is sour. Sour is not the word for the wine. I have good teeth, but truly this sausage baffles them. I am unappeased." He struck his lean middle. "I shall have no spirit to play another note to-night. (Keep your curses for better uses, friend; they will not sweeten the cup.) Now," said he, luxuriously stretching out his legs and gazing at them with a musing air, "I could have done with a capon, methinks, and a beaker of ripe old Burgundy. What say you, have *you* supped? Nay. Neither have I. Come, Sir Count, I invite your seriousness to an entertainment where nothing short of the best cellar and the fairest lady of the countryside will satisfy us."

Then, gazing at Steven's bewildered countenance for a while in silence, he went on with sudden earnestness. "The high-born English lady and the estimable Austrian nobleman, who are jointly responsible, as I understand, for your existence, have spoilt the dish for want of a little spice. Heavens, sir! have you never a smile in you, never a spark for the humorous side of things? Why, youth itself should be the laughter of life. Come with me—you have much to learn."

And leaving the meal further unheeded, he took the young man by the arm and led him to the door. The village was now all in grey shadow, but the strong-house on the height still glowed like a ruby. Pointing to it: "I brought you once," said the vagrant, "into somewhat low company. That was the story of our first meeting. To-night, if you will, I shall bring you into high."

"Lord Gemini!" exclaimed the landlord, who had been hanging open-mouthed, ready for the roar at Fiddle-Hans' humour; "up yonder—where the Burgrave locks up his lady?"

"Even so," said the hungry fiddler imperturbably. "And you must lend your donkey and little Georgi, and see that the nobleman's valise is safely conveyed upwards. For yonder we spend the night."

The idea seemed beyond a joke; and yet, on an imperial gesture of the vagrant, the host of the "Silver Stork" withdrew without further parley to carry out the order.

"Don't make a fool of me," whispered Steven in his singular adviser's ear.

"Why, 'tis the wisdom of youth to be foolish—'tis your privilege to be foolish with grace. O, could you but learn that . . . !" interrupted the other impatiently. "Not to-night, dear children, but to-morrow . . . . to-morrow you shall dance your feet off. I am a great person to-night; I am supping in the old Burg."

"O!" said the children, who had gathered like sparrows on their fiddler's reappearance. "O!" And awestruck they scattered.

"That Fiddle-Hans . . . !" said the landlord, as by and by he watched his guests depart. "He bewitches all, great and small. But this is a strong one. . . . There they go. Maybe they'll never come back!" He had the inherited village terror of the menace of the Burg. "Dungeons up there, and trap-doors, and none ever the wiser. O Lord Gemini!"

* * * * *

"Sidonia," said the lady up in the turret-room, "I will not endure it!"

As this remark was made at least five times a day, the hearer was perhaps less impressed than the desperate air of the speaker demanded.

"I will throw myself from the window," continued the Burgravine, carefully propping her plump elbows on the stone sill to gaze down with safety.

"If you'd only come sometimes and walk with me!" said little Sidonia, smiling.

"Walk, child? Your uncle knew well what he was doing when he stuck me up on this diabolic crag. I have not a pair of shoes that would last me half way down. And the very looking at the road up to this place! O"—she covered her eyes with her hand and shuddered—"it makes me reel with giddiness!"

"It was lovely in the forest," said Sidonia. "The strawberry flowers are coming out, and——"

"Strawberry flowers! Alas! is that what you ought to think of at your age? You, too—'tis monstrous cruelty!"

"The fawns are growing and are so sweet——"

"Fawns! 'Tis a lover should be sweet to you. As for me—O, woe!"

Sidonia, slight, slim, and sun-kissed as a young woodland thing herself, grew crimson behind her aunt's dejected head.

"Why—why, then, does Uncle Ludovic keep us here?" she queried.

Uncle Ludovic's lady flounced round in her chair, her eyes darting flames, a flood of words rising to her cherry lip.

"Why? Because, having spent most of his life in studying our sex, he flatters himself now upon a wide experience of our frailties. Because, having so often proved how easy it is to break the marriage vow, he can put no confidence in another's keeping it. Because," and her bosom heaved with indignation, "Cassel is the most amusing spot at this moment in the whole of Europe, and no husband who respects himself can take his pleasure with any comfort, if he does not feel that his wife is correspondingly bored."

"But uncle has his Chancellor's duty," said Sidonia, after pondering awhile upon these enlightening remarks.

"Chancellor's duties!" The lady drummed on the diamond panes. "O, yes, my love, King Jerome requires onerous duties of his ministers, and I've no doubt that Ludovic performs his *con amore*." Suddenly her fingers ceased their angry tune. She swung back the window a trifle wider and leaned out further than she had ventured upon her threat of suicide. "Look, look!" she cried in altered tones. "Do you see, child? There are two men coming up the road with a pack-horse. No, 'tis a donkey!"

Sidonia leaned eagerly out across her aunt's shoulder. They were but a pair of children of different ages, when all was said and done.

"'Tis the gardener and the shepherd," opined she.

"O, yes, the very outline of humpback John and the swing of bandy Peperl!" (This was sarcastic.) "To the hangman with these evening mists! Now—now, see, a gentleman, or I'm a goose-girl—a young man, or I'm a grandmother!"

"Why, 'tis Fiddle-Hans!" exclaimed the lady's niece in amazement. But it was not, surely, the sight of Fiddle-Hans which brought such crimson to her cheek.

"And who may Fiddle-Hans be?" cried the Burgravine.

"The roadside player," said the girl. "Surely you have heard of him? If he were young and wore a plume or a dagger, people would call him a troubadour. And his music—ah! it moves the heart like——"

"Why, the creature's a beggar, child!" interrupted the lady. "But the other——" She ran away from the window in great fluster. "It's quite clear, my dear, that you and I shall have company at last. O, for once I will be mistress here! Call Elise! Get you into a decent gown, for Heaven's sake! My rose taffeta—it shall be my rose taffeta. And you? Wear anything but white at your peril!

* * * * *

"The Lord Burgrave is not in the Castle. The gracious Lady Burgravine never receives visitors." Thus Martin the gatekeeper, thrusting his ugly head out of the *vasistas*.

The last of the sunlight had faded. Grey and sheer rose the Burg walls and turrets above the visitors' heads; sheer and grey fell the mountain-side away at their feet.

"Mark now, sir, for here are we back in the Middle Ages," whispered Fiddle-Hans to his companion. Aloud he cried to the porter, who was slowly withdrawing his countenance: "Half a minute, friend, and let us examine your statement. That the Lord Burgrave is away, I am aware; but that your lady does not receive has still to be proved. How if we two come upon the invitation of the Burgrave himself?"

Through the gathering gloom Steven peered at the musician's mocking features. Martin the porter stared in silence for a moment; then, with a great groaning of bars and grinding of keys, set the great door ajar—not to admit them, indeed, but that he might stare the closer.

"Martin," pursued the fiddler gravely, "your name had better have been Thomas, for you are born an unbeliever."

"My orders are," said Martin in surly tones, "to admit no one."

"Fellow," said the fiddler, "a servant's orders, I take it, are not like the Ten Commandments, but subject to variations according to another's pleasure. What if I tell you that, knowing your master——"

"You? Know my master!" The porter's teeth showed like an old dog's in a grin, half scorn, half doubt.

"Aye, we have but recently parted. By the same token, friend, he is now at Halberstadt, and will be here to-morrow. Meanwhile, as it is damp and night falls, admit us to your stone hall and let us sit, for you will be wise to gaze at us awhile longer before you take upon yourself to drive off Burgrave's friend and the Burgravine's kinsman from doors to which they have been invited. Look at that gentleman. There is a gentleman for you, from the crown of his noble head to the sole of his high-born foot! And look at me. Ah, you know me! Fiddle-Hans, am I not? Beware, Martin, great people have their disguises—as you and I know."

The shot told, and Martin showed signs of agitation and yielding. Fiddle-Hans, keeping him under the mockery of his glance, pursued his argumentative advantage:

"Now, cease scratching that grey stubble, and I will tell thee what to do to save thee from a false step. Go thou to the gracious lady and ask her if her lord has not advised her of the probable visit of two travellers, and request of her whether, these two gentlemen having presented themselves, it is not her wish, in obedience to her lord, that they should be admitted. Meanwhile, we shall wait here on this stone bench, and I shall beguile my noble companion's weariness with a little air of music."

The porter withdrew slowly without another word, but not without casting backward glances of doubt upon the newcomers.

"How do you dare?" asked Steven, fixing almost awestruck eyes upon Fiddle Hans, who, nursing his instrument upon one knee, was coolly winding up the string.

"Dare? I?" He twanged the cord, shook his head, and fell to screwing again. "Why should I not dare? What have I to fear? What have I to lose? We are sure of a welcome, I tell you, of a supper, and a good joke."

"Your magnificent audacity!" said Steven, sitting gingerly down at the end of the bench and looking at the other's lean figure, as if it had been that of the

"'Half a minute, friend, and let us examine your statement.'"

Prince of Lies himself. "Positively, I myself could hardly believe you were not speaking the truth."

"And so I was," said the other composedly. "Not one word but was solemn verity."

"O, but stay! How come I to be kinsman to the Burgravine?"

"You are Austrian," quoth the musician, "so is she, as I happen to know. Both the finest flower of the Empire's aristocracy. If you're not related, somewhere, I'll eat my fiddle."

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Steven, opening his eyes very wide. "I suppose it is on the same kind of plea that you have your acquaintance with the Burgrave—an intimate acquaintance?"

"Intimate. I have said so. The Burgrave of Wellenshausen is a type that is true to itself."

"And he has invited us to visit the Burg?" Steven's tones broke into mirth.

"Indubitably." The player raised his fiddle and drew a long note from it that was a musical mockery of the young man's high key. "The husband who locks up a light-hearted wife alone in an inaccessible tower invites in terms most positive every gentleman of heart and spirit in the country to come and console her. M. de Wellenshausen is at Halberstadt—I was playing at the Crown Hotel—he will be here to-morrow. And he said to me: 'Friend'—mark you, *Friend*—'you must come and play that tune at my castle.' He's fond of music, you see. 'Twas a promise. And the only person who will lie in the whole matter to-day is the noble lady Burgravine. She is dying by inches of *ennui*, and she will—be quite certain of it!—she will assure the porter that our visit has indeed been announced to her. 'Tis to be regretted, but such is the way of women who bore themselves in lonely strong-houses."

He caught his fiddle to his breast, and liquid melody flowed out into the empty hall and went echoing away down long passages and up into vaulted roofs. Like curious rabbits from a warren, now a scullion popped a head out of some dark corner, now a rosy wench half opened a side door and peeped out smiling. There awoke all about the sleepy castle a sound of skirmishing and tittering; now a patter of bare feet; now the tramp of boots that no precautions could hush. At length the majestic form of the major-domo appeared before the vagrants, magnificent in his silver chains and silk stockings. Fiddle-Hans hushed his music and leaned over to Steven to whisper in his ear—

"See, he has been putting on his grand garb of ceremony to deliver his lady's little lie."

"The high-born one, my mistress, had not expected you before to-morrow," said the butler, with a deep bow to Steven. He cast a fishlike eye of astonishment upon the fiddler, but nevertheless pursued: "Will your Honour follow me to your apartment?" Again he stared at the musician, who nimbly rose and bowed.

"My Honour will also follow," he said blandly. "Our valise is on the donkey's back, at the door; see to it."

* * * * *

If Fiddle-Hans were surprised at his own success, it was only the humorous twitch of his eyebrows that betrayed the fact. He was of those, apparently, whose talent for seizing opportunities would almost evoke the belief that they have created them.

"Comrades should share and share alike," said he presently, laying down Steven's brush, which he had been wielding dexterously on his own wild locks—"lend me a black riband for my queue—it is out of mode, but I am of the old stock. I have been shaved *à velours* to-day—'twas an inspiration! A cloud of powder would complete me, but you new century bucks know not of these refinements. Let me see . . . . . I think that black suit of yours so neatly folded in the corner of our valise is perhaps what would best become my gravity. Yes. And a ruffled shirt . . . . Thank you. Ah! . . . And those violet silk stockings."

Steven stood hypnotised.

"Your eyes will positively drop out," said the fiddler, "if you stare any more." He drew a snuff-box from his discarded coat and tapped it with his finger: "A pinch is but a poor thing, if a man has not a ruffle to his wrist," he said, and was not ill-pleased to see how Steven marvelled at the grace with which he swung his borrowed laces, the air with which he flipped an invisible atom from his cuff. He took a step as though his legs had never known but silk. Steven's suit, if a little large, hung on his figure with a notable fitness.

"As I live!" cried Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg, with a loud laugh of discovery, "a gentleman, after all!"

Fiddle-Hans drew his black brows together with his swift frown.

"Entered Sidonia, almost at a run."

"Your equal, you mean, doubtless," said he drily. "You do me too great honour." Then his eyes softened again, as in his turn he surveyed his companion.

"Come," said he, "I would give all my superior years, after all, for some of your youthful disabilities. I cherish no illusions as to which of us the fair Burgravine will deem the better worth her notice."

And, indeed, when the two were ushered into the long, dim, tapestry-hung saloon, the bright eyes of the lady of the Castle merely swept Fiddle-Hans, amazingly distinguished as he was in his borrowed plumes, to rest with complacency on the youth who followed him.

Steven held his head high, after the fashion of your shy, self-conscious fellow. But his head being one upon which Nature had set a noble stamp, this became it well. If there was pride in the arch of his eyebrow and the curl of his lip, there was likewise race to justify it. Betty, the Burgravine, could note as much between two flickers of her long eyelashes; note, too, that, thank goodness, he wore none of those new, odious Cossack-trousers, but kept to the fashion which made it worth while for a man to have a good line to his leg; note, furthermore, that plum-colour frac, maize waistcoat, and dove-grey kerseymeres make excellent harmony with rose taffeta. The lady had been created for Courts, and even now—perched like an eaglet in the old mountain Burg—moved in a gay, trifling atmosphere of her own. And Count

Steven, who had also been constructed for the high places of life, felt, as he returned her gaze, that he was in his element once more.

"The gentlemen!" announced Niklaus with a nervous giggle. He knew Fiddle-Hans—as who did not that belonged to the countryside? But familiarity had not so far bred contempt, and neither he nor his compeers ever ventured to question anything the mysterious being chose to do. Had the fiddler desired himself to be announced as Archangel Michael, or Prince Lucifer, the Emperor Napoleon, or the Wandering Jew, Niklaus would scarcely have been surprised.

The rose-red lady advanced a sweet little sandal and made a profound curtsy. Her classic top-knot of curls was richly dark, and so was the velvet of her cheek; but as she looked up slowly from her inclination, Steven was quite startled to find that her eyes opened blue as forget-me-nots.

"Gentlemen!" ejaculated she, translating Niklaus' clumsy Saxon German into tripping French—it being the tone of German Courts to speak French. The blue flowers of her eyes widened in surprise upon Fiddle-Hans. She had not known there were two *gentlemen* when she looked forth from the window: only the goodly youth and his roadside guide. But this elderly person was a gentleman, no doubt about that, and a fine one, too. Only, so old!

And now he took the lead, as became his years.

"Madame la Burgravine," responded he; and even Steven, in spite of Anglo-Austrian ear, could note the exquisite purity of his Gallic accent, "permit two travellers to express their gratitude for the generous alacrity with which you have granted them hospitality. We had lost our way——"

"Lost your way?" interrupted the lady; and an irrepressible smile curved her lips upwards.

"Yes, madam," pursued the other imperturbably; "and, with the night coming on in this wild and mountainous district, Heaven knows what might not have happened to us!"

"I know not what your destination may be, sir," answered she, drawing back with a faint air of haughtiness, "but surely yours is a strange itinerary that took an isolated crag on the road."

"Madam," said he, "we gave ourselves infinite pains to attain this height."

The glance towards herself, the touch at his heart, the bow, made of these words a delicate compliment. The line of her mouth began once more to waver. "To have gone down again, madam, would have been impossible. Our itinerary, as you say, is perhaps difficult to explain. If I were to tell you that we took a wrong turning, my friend here would correct me, for he is convinced, madam, it was the right turning, since it brought him to your feet."

Here Steven could do nothing but bow. This he did, however, with such youthful grace and so ardent a look, that his hostess melted outright into smiles.

"Sir," said she to him somewhat coyly; and the young man felt he had been eloquent indeed.

"Count Steven Lee Waldorf-Kilmansegg," introduced Fiddle-Hans, with a courtly wave of his arm.

"Lee . . . . Waldorf?" quoth she vivaciously.

"Steven Lee in England, Kilmansegg in Austria," said the fiddler blandly.

"O my beloved Austria!" she exclaimed, and the forget-me-not eyes became suffused with the tear of sensibility.

"Waldorf-Kilmansegg of Waldeck," enumerated the master of ceremonies; while Steven stood in dignity, conscious of his honours.

"Then we are cousins!" She clapped her soft palms; the rising emotion was forgotten in laughter. "Positively we are cousins. I am Schwartzenberg—Betty von Schwartzenberg—and my mother's cousin, Rezy Lutzof, married Tony Kilmansegg. You are welcome, my cousin," said she, and held out her hand. He kissed it ceremoniously, and she, bending forward, sketched a butterfly salute on his forehead. It was the custom in his father's country; but he had lived long in England, and it had grown unfamiliar. His heart contracted with a delicious spasm, and the blood sang in his ears.

Before he knew what he was doing, he found himself holding the taper fingers close, found his lips upon them again.

Perhaps the lady was displeased; but if so, she cloaked the fact with a very pretty blush and, as they drew apart, there could be no doubt but that the young visitor's position was established.

She looked expectantly then towards the elder of her guests.

He stood watching them with benevolent gaze, tapping his snuff-box, one leg becomingly advanced; and she waited to hear a no less fine-sounding introduction. But as the waiting was prolonged to almost a hint of awkwardness:

"Will you not," said she, "Cousin Kilmansegg, return Monsieur's good offices?"

It was Count Steven's turn to blush.

"My friend," said the fiddler, after enjoying the poor youth's agony with a relentless eye for a second or two, "has been content to accept my companionship as entertaining and useful to himself without inquiring into my ancestry. But such indulgence, my gracious hostess, I cannot claim of you. Through all the noble blood that flows in your veins, there mingles, of course, still a drop of Mother Eve's. Permit me to make myself known to you as Jean, Seigneur de la Viole, Marquis de Grand-Chemin—to lay but a couple of my poor titles at your feet."

She pondered awhile, nibbling her little finger, her delicate eyebrows wrought as if in effort of memory. Then she said with gravity:

"Your name, sir, has an ancient sound."

"Madam," he responded, "I would not boast, but there is none more ancient in our world."

Over again she pondered, looking down at the tip of her sandal. The blue eyes took stock afresh, and, thereupon, sunshine chased the gathering cloud from her face. With the air of one making up her mind to be amused without questioning:

"You are welcome too," she said, "monsieur—my guest."

"Ah, madam," responded he, "pity that this, the fairest of my titles, must needs be the most fleeting!"

Tying a blue riband into a hasty knot as she came, entered Sidonia, almost at a run. All this time she had been striving to turn her heavy fair tresses into the fashionable top-knot—with what result her aunt's first glance of pity told her but too clearly.

She halted in her rapid advance and stood, blushing like a schoolgirl, unable to lift her eyes.

"Child," said the Burgravine, "here is my cousin, Count Kilmansegg, who could not pass by his kinswoman in exile without personally inquiring after her well-being." When Sidonia ventured a stealthy look, it was to find, O bitter moment! that she was unrecognised. Yet they had met before. "And this gentleman——" pursued her aunt with a small, sarcastic smile.

The girl, bewildered, had begun her second curtsy, when she stopped herself with a cry of utter amazement:

"The Geigel-Onkel!"

"Madam," intervened the fiddler gravely, addressing the Burgravine, "that is another of my honours—to young people who love my viol, I am the Geigel-Onkel."

"Here," said the lady with equal gravity, addressing her niece in a meaning tone, "the gentleman will be known as Monsieur de la Viole."

"Marquis de Grand-Chemin," insistently added the vagrant, with his grand bow.

"Marquis de Grand-Chemin," admitted the lady. Nevertheless, it was the arm of her cousin, the mere Count, that she took to conduct her to the dining-apartment.

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The servants had retired: Master Fiddle-Hans' promised supper-party was over. It had been to the full as succulent, as elegant, as he had foretold. And now, holding the stem of a long, cut-glass beaker between his second and third finger, he was gazing abstractedly at the noble wine. Where were his thoughts, and why was he so dull all at once, with flower and silver before him, crystal and fine porcelain? With the ruby waiting in his cup—the ruby of that noble "Clos Vougeot" before which Bonaparte, the republican, on his way to Italy, had made his soldiers halt and present arms as to the prince of vintages! Fiddle-Hans, who could sing over a hard crust by the dusty roadside, and give thanks for the water of the mountain stream! Had he had his violin to his hand now, its music would have been of tears.

His eye moved. It rested first on the fresh, briar-rose face of the young girl, with a strange look of tenderness; then it fell upon the Burgravine. Her plump, olive shoulders half out of her rosy gown, her exquisite little doll-face thrust forward—the whole of her an altar to admiration—she was offering herself in eagerness, in ecstasy, to the fire that was beginning to kindle in the hitherto decorous countenance of the youth opposite to her. And as the musician noted, he frowned and his lips curled into contempt. Then his gaze sought Steven. He saw the flush upon the boy's cheek and the light in his eye; and his frown grew deeper. This base flame was none of his kindling.

He turned in his chair and looked again keenly at the silent girl. There was something austere in the mantle of pride and shyness in which she had wrapped herself.

"Little Miss Sidonia!" said he softly. She flashed a quick glance at him, and her eyes filled. "Shall I make you some music?" His face relaxed into tenderness again as he spoke.

She nodded. The corners of her mouth quivered ; if she had said a word, she must have burst into sobs.

"She but put a pillow under his head," thought the fiddler, "and that was enough to make the flower of love blossom ! Ah, youth ! Poor little heart ! " Once more he regarded the other pair, who were now whispering.

"After the feast, the dance ; what say you ? " he cried.

"O, the dance, the dance ! " exclaimed the Burgravine, leaping to her feet. What a woman, what a puppet, to have a man's honour in her keeping !

"Then I will play to you," went on Fiddle-Hans. And, grinning, Niklaus was despatched for his violin.

"It shall be a minuet," said the player after a pause, on the echo of a sigh.

Then the Marquis de Grand-Chemin waved his bow with a flourish. The ruffles at his wrists flew, he took a step with a grace ; it was as if a fragrance from dead Trianon roses were wafted in between the barbarous Gothic tapestries of the Burg.

"It is the dance of great ladies and fine gentlemen," he said, beginning a melody of older days, mingled of archness and subtle melancholy. And playing, he went on, his words winding themselves, with a kind of lilt of their own, into the garland of sounds. "You, sir, bow with your hand on your heart. You take her hand and you look into her eyes. 'Ah ! ' say you, eloquent though silent, 'to hold those delicate finger-tips, madam, through life . . . to have the rapture of your sweet company . . . then indeed would every step be music ! ' 'O, sir' (says she in the same language), 'you confound me ! ' And with this she sinks from you into a curtsy that is all dignity, all grace. Again you bow—of a verity you did not deserve her ! But what is this ? Her hand is in yours again. O, this time you draw closer to her . . . you hold her little hand aloft ! The satin of her gown whispers to your damask -her shoulder touches yours . . . you wheel her from right to left—with what pride, Heavens ! what respect ! You turn her lovely form, by the merest hint of your adoring fingers, from that side to this, that all may see, and see again, the prize that has fallen to your lot. . . ."

"We do not dance the minuet in our days," interrupted Steven with bashful resentment.

John of the Viol's delicate measures, that had rung half humorous, half pathetic, wholly sweet, as memories of past delights must ever be, ceased abruptly. He gave the young man a dark look as he held his bow aloft.

"No," said he, "you are right. The minuet has gone to the guillotine. France has brought new dances into fashion : *Ça ira, Ça ira, Dansons la carmagnole !* " His face grew terrible as he struck the notes of the bloodstained gutter-song into his strings. "New dances for France, that she may dance to her death ! "

"Fie, the ugly tune ! " said Countess Betty. No shadow of the musician's tragic passion was reflected upon her face. "Monsieur le Marquis, play us a waltz ! " She caught joyfully at her own suggestion as a child its cowslip ball. "A waltz, a waltz ! Beau Cousin of Kilmansegg, they tell me 'tis the rage. A pin for your old minuets ! "

"A waltz be it ! " said Fiddle-Hans. Anger was upon him, and he made his violin chant it, setting it and the brutal irony of the "*Ça ira* ! " to the rhythm of a fantastic waltz. "Twirl, vapid heart and empty head ! Hold her, prance round with her, feel your goat's legs growing, you who might have lifted your head with the gods and known the matchless rapture of the heights ! Is it for this that you are young ? "

Faster and faster went the music, fevered, with mad, shrill skirl, and faster the whirling. Beau Cousin began to pant. He held Belle Cousine so close to him that she, too, scarce could breathe. Loose flew her hair—one little sleeve almost broke across the heaving shoulder. Sidonia could look no longer ; she turned to the window and leaned her hot cheek against the pane, staring at the stars with burning eyes. Something clutched at her heart and throat with a fierce grip.

Without warning, Fiddle-Hans brought his bow across his strings with a tearing sound and, as if a sharp sword had fallen between them, the dancers fell apart, astonished and not a little confused.

Steven staggered and caught at the chair behind him. The Burgrave's lady put a hand to her dishevelled tresses and then to the laces at her bosom, and grew scarlet : brow and cheek, throat and shoulder.

"You no longer dance the minuet ? " said Fiddle-Hans, with a little laugh, picking at his now placid strings ; and Steven thought that the man had the laugh of a devil and that it was echoed by his instrument. "O, you have a thousand reasons, sir, and so has

"Faster and faster went the music, and faster the whirling."

madam, for the waltz is a fuller measure. Gracious lady, you are out of breath. May I sit beside you awhile? And you, sir, will you not expound the first principles of this —this graceful and elegant pastime to Mademoiselle yonder, whose youth has yet to learn the new fashion. Is it not right, Burgravine, that these young things, after all, should draw together, while you and I look on—you, the staid, married woman, I, the old man?"

She answered him not, save by a look of wondering offence.

"Ah, madam," he went on, as he sat down beside her, "and you are angry with your lord and master because he shuts you up in this strong-house? But, good Heaven, 'tis the proof of his loving appreciation of your value!"

"O, aye!" she answered in high contempt, "tis a sign of vast affection, doubtless."

"Madam, he lays his treasure where thieves cannot attain it. At least, poor man, so he fondly trusts!"

"And therefore the unhappy treasure is to be consumed by moth and rust," retorted the lady.

"Madam," said the fiddler in a low voice, "I understand that the owner of the treasure had reason to fear a more indelible stain——"

"How dare you?" she flashed upon him. But he was picking his violin with a pensive air. Then he suddenly looked up at her and smiled.

"Ah! most gracious one, if I were the happy possessor of a bird of such brilliant plumage as yourself, I would——" he paused.

"You would what? Pray proceed." She was waiting for her triumph.

"I would open wide all the doors and bid it fly."

And then she called to him again: "How dare you?" And so insulted was she that there came a sob into her throat.

"You see," said he, drawing an accompaniment of whispering notes to his words, "that, after all, it is monsieur your husband's point of view that you think the more complimentary."

"He should trust me," she whimpered.

"Madam, who knows?" he responded, "stranger things have come to pass. Some day, perhaps, the bird will not crave for flight—it may cling to the nest——" His fingers moved delicately, the bow swung with the gentle pliancy of some green bough of spring—it was a measure of engaging rhythm and playfulness; yet soft, soft as, under the eaves, the swallow's note at dawn.

Fascinated, she cried, under her breath: "What is it?"

He answered her: "A cradle song . . ." and stopped.

His own face had altered indescribably. His restless eye had grown fixed and wistful. Little Madame de Wellenshausen hung her head, and the gathering tears fell.

* * * * *

Whilst Fiddle-Hans thus engaged his hostess, Steven Lee, with slow steps, had gone across the room to the girlish figure by the window. He had grown to believe that this Fiddle-Hans had some uncanny power by which he enforced his will, after the fashion of that Mesmer of whom one had heard so much.

Sidonia turned upon him, with a sudden jerk of her chin, a flash of her eye, as he halted beside her. Upon which he exclaimed in amazement:

"Why, great Heavens, you are the girl of the forest-house!"

"You have not, I think, sir," she answered him, "eyes that see quick or far—'tis, no doubt, your town-breeding." The colour was slowly fading from her cheeks. She held herself very stiff and proud. But he was still all eager over his discovery.

"You brought me your pillow," said he, "when I lay hurt in the forest."

"I would have done the same to a sick dog," said she.

"You cried over me when you thought I was dead," exclaimed Steven, stung by her contempt.

"Had I known you better, sir——"

Her eyes were bright and hard, her lip was a curve of scorn, and her chin a tilted defiance. But all at once he saw that, under the close-clinging fabric of her short-waisted gown, her heart was beating like a madly frightened bird in the fowler's net. The knot of blue ribands upon her bosom danced with its fluttering. And there came upon him a desire, at once tender and cruel, to feel that beating heart beneath his hand. He gave a short laugh.

"Shall I teach you the waltz?" he said, leaning forward. "It is quite easy—just my arm about you, and the music does the rest."

She shrank back with a look that would have blasted him if it could.

"Do not dare to touch me!" Though her heart palpitated into her very voice, she held her head high as the hind in the forest, and went on: "I might have danced that minuet, as Fiddle-Hans put it into music. But I don't like your manner of dancing, sir, nor your English manners at all. It would be best if people stayed in their own country."

And then, while he stood, as if her childish hand had struck him, she passed from him and paused for a moment before her aunt and the fiddler, who were now sitting together in a strange silence. And with the brief remark, "I am going to sleep," she went proudly from the room.

"'You disgraced me to-night.'"

Fiddle-Hans had shaken off his musing fit. He laughed out loud.

"What, comrade, won't Mademoiselle learn the waltz from you, after so pretty a display?"

Madame looked down at her feet, as they peeped side by side from the hem of her garment, looking, the little humbugs, the pink of innocent propriety. She was subdued, even frightened, and her heart was stirred within her.

"Our evening is finished," said the Marquis de Grand-Chemin, rising with his great air. "Madam, this gentleman and I must march out with the dawn. Permit us now to offer you our respectful gratitude, and retire."

She held out her hand, and he took the tips of her fingers and bowed low. She curtsied. They might have been in his minuet, but it was with the music left out.

"Good-bye, my cousin," she said timidly. And "Good-bye," said he. They stood stiffly before each other, like two children found at fault. She was longing to tell him that it must not be "Good-bye" between her and him. But the fiddler's eye was upon her.

* * * *

Steven felt the world very flat, even on a mountain strong-house, as he sat down in the state bedroom and began with a yawn to unwind the folds of his stock. Next door the fiddler had locked himself in. He had not spoken to his companion since they had entered their apartment. Steven Lee, Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg, felt that he was in disgrace.

Suddenly Fiddle-Hans flung back the separating door and walked in. He was once more clad in his own shabby suit, and across his arms carried the borrowed raiment.

One by one he laid them down neatly in his companion's valise, rolling up the violet silk stockings at the last.

"Continue," said he, "my friend, to develop the growth of those goat legs of yours. It will save you in hosiery."

"Upon my soul," cried the young man, "I don't understand what you mean!" But his cheek crimsoned.

"You disgraced me to-night," said Fiddle-Hans. "What, sir! I have the kindness to bring you up here that you may snatch a delicate, Courtlike comedy from a lost century, and you turn it into a gross latter-day romp. I bring you from an alehouse into a castle, but you must needs drag your Teniers with you and spoil my Watteau! I play you a minuet, but what appeals to you is to clutch, and gambade, and——"

"You made the music, man," interrupted Steven, sulky as a schoolboy. "And it was she who asked for a waltz!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" went on the fiddler passionately; "it may be that we were no better as to morals, in my youth, than you are nowadays, but at least we took our pleasures like gentlemen. If we plucked a rose, we did it with a grace, between two fingers, not with the fist. We did not seize a lady round

the body and prance her like a milkmaid; what favours we took, we bent the knee to receive. O, sir, how little fragrance remains in the flower you mangle thus in your grasp! Three things there are, young man, that he who understands life must touch with fingers of gossamer: a subtle pleasantry, a lady's discretion, the illusions of a young heart. You have laid brute hands on all three to-night. Fie! you have spoiled my evening."

The contrast between the man in his humble clothes and the arrogant culture of his speech suddenly struck Steven to such a degree that he forgot to be angry at being rated, in his eagerness to catch further self-betrayal from the fantastic enigma. Become aware of the other's eye and expectant smile, the fiddler broke off abruptly and, for the first time in their acquaintance, looked disconcerted. Then he gave a good-humoured laugh, and his brow cleared.

"Blind, blind!" he said. "Why, was she not worthy of one look, the child in her virginal grace? When I came across you again, to-day, under the shadow of the Burg, my heart leaped like a little hare. I told myself I knew whom you were seeking. 'Youth finds out the way to youth,' said I in my fond mind. I believed you had traced her—the Romance that Fortune brought across your path in the forest. It was but cloud-building, but a spring fancy in an old man's dreams—the lad in whom I had taken a passing interest, the little maid I have grown to love. Why, you did not even recognise her! Yet she held your head on her knees when you were hurt! You were a knight to her, all gallant; and now——"

"She is an ill-mannered child," said Steven.

"She is as lovely as the woods at dawn—young, reluctant, mysterious, chill. When I approach her, it is with my hat in my hand. If I were young like you, I should kneel to her. The set of her head, the line of her little throat——" His voice grew suddenly husky. "Her little throat . . ." he repeated. And Steven, he knew not why, had an impression of a sadness so piercing that he dropped his eyes and dared not look at Fiddle-Hans again.

After a while, with a change of voice—

"I will wake you at sunrise," said the musician. "I have promised the children to play for them before school; and I must see you safely to the foot of the hill, ere we part, Count Comrade, having brought you up so high, or Heaven knows what fall might not be in store for you!"

* * * * *

And very unwilling was Steven Lee to rise after a poor night; and very ill-humoured was he as they set out at last, with their donkey, breakfastless, together. There was no joy or mystery in the morn; it gave them but white mists that wet like rain and clung close as they descended.

The fiddler was silent, absorbed in his own thought, and paid small heed to the youth's moodiness.

As they crossed the bridge, a travelling-chaise came through the haze towards them, passed them at full thunder, and drew up with a clatter some hundred yards beyond. Fiddle-Hans smiled sardonically.

"There goes Bluebeard, the Burgrave, to surprise his fond little wife. He is a trifle earlier on the road than I thought. Did I not do well to hurry your toilet? Who knows, you might have been hurried in still more disagreeable fashion. Well, the episode is over; and though you have much disappointed me, young sir——"

"But what will she tell him about our visit?" interrupted Steven with some anxiety.

Fiddle-Hans remained silent for a few paces.

"That," he said at last, "is a matter for illimitable fancy. . . ."

TEAMS LOADING UP AT A SMALL GOODS STATION, G. N. R.

RAILWAY COMPANIES AS ROAD CARRIERS.

By CHARLES H. GRINLING.

THE first railway companies in the United Kingdom were formed with the intention simply of providing tracks, over which coach proprietors, carriers, and traders and travellers generally would conduct the business of transport in much the same way as over a highway, a navigable river, or a canal. Almost before the lines were opened, it became evident that, in the interests both of safety and efficiency, the railway company must supply the motive-power as well as the permanent way; and the exclusion of passenger carriages, other than those owned or hired by the companies, soon followed. But to this day a large proportion of the mineral and goods traffic carried over our railways is conveyed in what are known as "private owners' wagons"; and yet, on the other hand, the companies have gradually, step by step, become the owners of a most extensive and varied equipment for carrying on work as carriers and caterers for travel and traffic, off the rails, both on land and by sea. If the London and North-Western, for example, were not world-famous as a railway company, we might think of it more often than we do as the owner of a fleet of Channel steamers second to none for the kind of work they do. The North-Eastern Railway Company are the largest dock-owners in the United Kingdom, and, perhaps, in the world. The Midland, as a hotel company, takes rank with the "Gordon" or the "Frederick"; and the Great Western has done more within the last year or two to develop the use of motor vehicles as public conveyances than any other corporation, company, or individual. The subject of railway companies' "side-shows" is, indeed, a fascinating one, to which I hope to have an opportunity of returning on a future occasion. My present object is to endeavour to give my readers an insight into an auxiliary business carried on by our railway companies which is not so much a "side-show" as an essential addition to their activities dating from the time, now many years ago, when they ceased to be railway companies in the original narrow sense of the term, and became common carriers.

It will probably surprise a good many of my readers to learn that there is no legal obligation upon the railway companies of the United Kingdom to act as carriers, nor, indeed, to do anything more than to provide the track for the conveyance of traffic. The Railway Clauses Consolidation Act of 1845

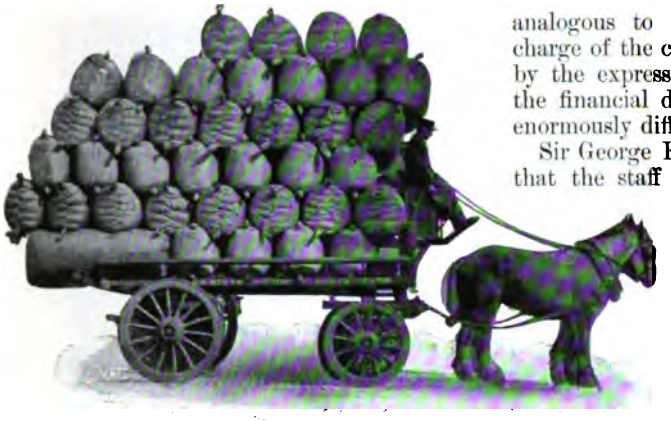
provides that it shall be lawful for a railway company to employ engines and carriages and convey passengers and goods, but it does not say that they shall do so. As for the collection and delivery of goods at the stations, that is absolutely a voluntary service, undertaken by the companies from purely commercial considerations. It is a service, moreover, which is not performed to the same extent by the Continental railways, and not at all by the railways of America. The class of traffic which our railway companies collect and deliver, as well as carry by rail, is in America handled almost entirely by the express companies, who in many cases not only perform the street cartage at either end of the railway journey, but furnish their own trucks, send their own servants

A LOAD OF FISH EMPTIES, L. AND N. W. R.

over the lines in charge of the freight, do the loading and unloading, and in some places provide their own station accommodation. In a word, their relation to the railway companies of America is analogous to that existing between the Post Office and our railway companies in respect to the Parcel Post traffic; except that the express companies there do a good deal more than the postal authorities do here.

With such exceptions as the Parcel Post, and the business done by private firms of "packed parcels" agents, or by forwarding agents who deal with oversea traffic, the "express" system does not exist in England. Even firms like Messrs. Pickford, and Messrs. Chaplin and Horne, who were in business as carriers in England long before the advent of railways, have become content to act merely as cartage agents to the railway companies. These old firms, however, did not give up their former priority without a struggle. For some years after the introduction of the railway system, they tried to keep the railway companies in a secondary position as sub-carriers, responsible only to them, and having directly no contact with the customers; and the control they had obtained over the business in the days of the canal-barge and pack-horse made it dangerous for the railway authorities too hastily to supersede the old firms. By way of compromise, a sort of partnership was in many cases formed between the railway company and the carrier, the most prominent instance of which was the arrangement which existed until a few years ago between the London and North-Western and Messrs. Pickford. Similar alliances were made in every town where influential firms of road carriers existed; and some of the leading railway companies — the Great Western, for example—did not find it necessary for many years after their incorporation to provide a single horse and cart of their own. But as the railways pushed their way into new districts over which no other carrier had obtained an ascendancy, or where a competitive line, on entering a town, found the existing cartage connections already appropriated by its rival or rivals, it became necessary for the companies to organise their own equipment for collection and delivery. Having once established a horse-and-cartage department, the railway authorities naturally began to ask themselves whether it would not be more economical to supersede some of their cartage agents by employing their own teams elsewhere.

The agency system is by no means dead yet, but in process of time it seems doomed to extinction—so far, at least, as the more prosperous railway companies are concerned. Some of the poorer ones are glad to keep it on, and even to extend it, because it saves them from the necessity of large capital expenditure on horses, carts, stables, receiving-offices, etc. Broadly speaking, it is no doubt better in the interests both of customers and shareholders that the railway company should undertake the whole responsibility and do the whole work of conveyance between



A LOAD OF HOPS, L. AND N. W. R.

sender and consignee. The intervention of a middleman means that the charges must cover a second profit, with no off-setting economy except in the few cases where larger loads can be made up. Were the railway companies of the United Kingdom to combine to hand over the whole of their general goods and parcels traffic to a single firm or corporation of carrying agents, undoubtedly immense economies might be effected; but such a monopoly would not be tolerated by public opinion, unless it were under the strictest Government supervision or in the hands of a State department like the Post Office. As an alternative to the complete nationalisation of our railways, there is, I think, a good deal to be said in favour of an arrangement whereby a national organisation analogous to the Post Office, should take charge of the class of traffic which is handled by the express companies in America; but the financial details of the change would be enormously difficult to work out.

Sir George Findlay once said in a lecture that the staff of men and horses which the London and North-Western Railway Company employed in the collection and delivery of goods in London exceeded, he believed, the number required to work all the coaches and vans that ran in former days to and from the North. If this was true in the days of his general managership, when at least a third of the North-Western's cartage in London was done by Pickford, it must fall far short of the truth of to-day, when a very largely increased business is carried almost exclusively by the company's own teams. Certain it is that, including not only the railway companies' own studs, but the auxiliary teams employed by the cartage agents, the number of horses employed in the transport of goods throughout the United Kingdom at the present day is far in excess of the total at work before railways came in "to ruin the English breed of horses"—as croakers averred—and "reduce the equine *genus* to the level of a museum exhibit." The London and North-Western and the Midland each own over 5,000 horses—the North-Western nearly 6,000—exclusive of the number they employ through agents

CARTING A BIG BOILER, L. AND N. W. R.

Photo by [*C. Pilkington.*

SHUNTING-HORSES AT WORK, G. N. R.

in various towns: the Great Northern has 2,782; the Great Western 2,668; the Lancashire and Yorkshire 1,867; and the Great Eastern 1,745. If we compare these figures with the locomotive returns of the same companies, we find that in every case the number of horses owned is considerably in excess of the total of the iron steeds. In the cases of the Midland and the Great Northern, the horses outnumber the locomotives in no less a proportion than two to one. The fears of some of the old-fashioned opponents of the railway would surely have been allayed could they have foreseen that after seventy years of steam locomotion, two horses would be employed for each engine in the conveyance of the traffic of some of the leading lines. And now that the iron horse itself is threatened with extinction by the progress of electricity, the devotees of the steam locomotive may find comfort in the oft-proved experience that a new invention frequently supplements rather than supersedes an old one.

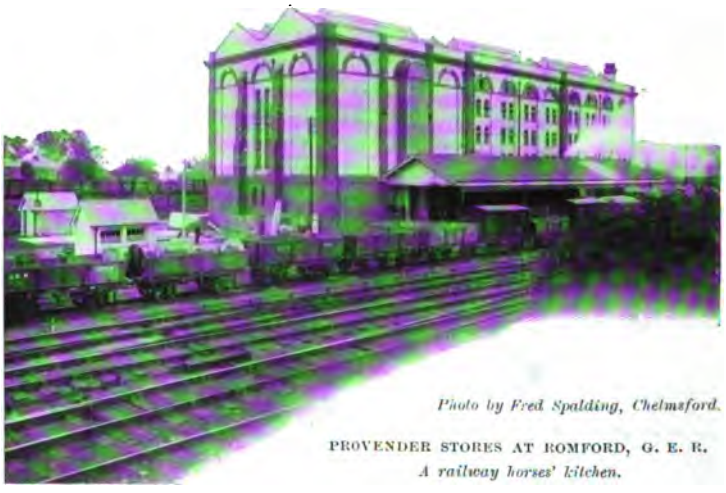


Photo by Fred Spalding, Chelmsford.

PROVENDER STORES AT ROMFORD, G. E. R.
A railway horses' kitchen.

There is, however, one sphere of railway work from which horses are very properly being withdrawn, as fast as science and capital can supply a mechanical substitute. I allude to the work of the shunting-yards. There are still a great many shunting-horses employed on our railways—the Great Eastern, for example, has 275 of them—and their life, particularly at the small country stations which abound on such a line as the Great Eastern, is easy and agreeable enough on the whole. But no one can ignore the risks to which horses engaged in shunting are exposed when their work has to be done in close proximity to lines of fast and frequent traffic. Intelligent though they are, and wonderfully wary as with experience they become, casualties amongst their number, as in the case of the shunters themselves, unhappily occur, not only by getting run over—which is a comparatively rare thing—but from their liability to catch their feet on or between the rails, or to trip over the numerous bars and wires which abound at busy junctions. Many a broken leg and sprained foot result from these causes, despite the care which is now taken by the engineers' departments to cover up obstructions and fill in holes at all places where shunting work has to be done. In all goods yards of modern design the shunting-horse is superseded by hydraulic or electric capstans, which do the work with greater efficiency and less cost; and at the present rate of progress in mechanical invention, it may be confidently predicted that the shunting-horse, like Othello, will soon find "his occupation gone" at all but the quietest of country depôts and stations.

Most railway companies pay a good price for their horses, buying them young and in the best of condition after they have been well broken in to work by a spell on a farm. The average working life of a railway horse is between five and six years, at the expiration of which time the animals still have sufficient work left in them to command a fair price for farm duty again. It is considered good policy for a railway company to have all its horses, as far as possible, in the pink of condition, and this can be achieved only by generous buying, good feeding, careful working, and constant attention to the health of the stud. Then when the time comes to sell, the horse superintendent is rewarded by getting back nearly a third of the money he originally paid for each horse. About £60 is considered a fair price to pay for recruits for a railway stud, and one of the companies gets on the average as much as £23 for each horse sold after nearly six years of regular service. This last figure is, however, rather above the average price realised on horses sold by the companies generally. Usually out of a large railway

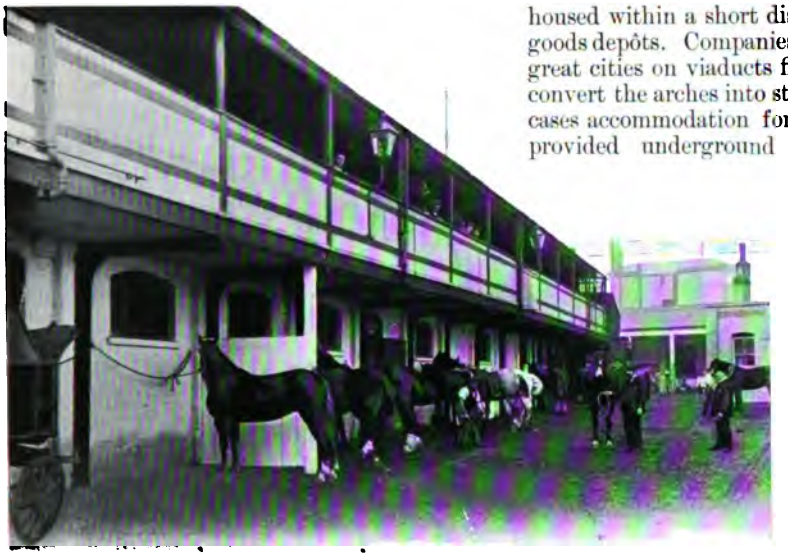


Photo by] [*C. Pilkington.*

G. N. R. HOSPITAL STABLES.

Situated within a mile of King's Cross.

housed within a short distance of the central goods depôts. Companies whose lines run into great cities on viaducts find it economical to convert the arches into stables, whilst in other cases accommodation for the horses has been provided underground beneath buildings erected by the companies for other purposes. Most of the modern stables, however, are constructed on the upper floors of premises devoted to other uses, or in buildings of several storeys specially constructed so as to give the maximum accommodation with the minimum occupation of land. At the Great Western stables near Paddington 626 of the 1,500 horses kept by that company in London are housed in a building having four floors of stables, whilst the Great Northern at Clerkenwell has three storeys of stables accommodating 189 horses in a building the ground floor of which is devoted

stud three or four at least are killed by accident during a year, whilst the number who die, or have to be destroyed, is about two per cent. of the total kept. Even these, however, are not a total loss to the department, as the carcasses sell for about thirty shillings each. As to the uses to which the various parts of a dead horse are put, it will probably be well for our comfort not to inquire too closely; but it is interesting to know that the animal oil extracted from the carcass is re-sold to the horse-owner for use in the harness-room.

To stable hundreds of horses in great cities like London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, or Leeds is a difficult thing for a railway company to do without incurring prohibitive expenditure for land; for the majority of the animals must be

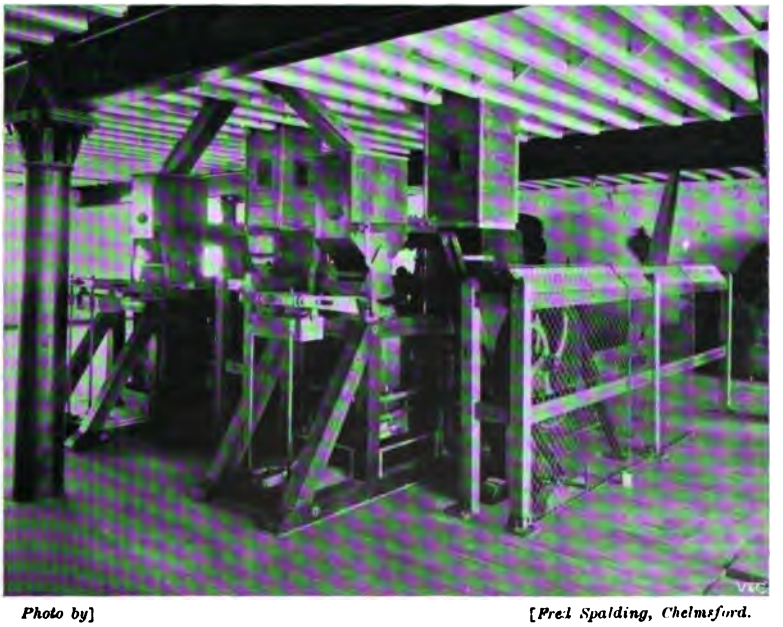


Photo by] [*Fred Spalding, Chelmsford.*

VIEW INSIDE G. E. R. PROVENDER STORES.

Showing two machines, manufactured and patented by Messrs. E. R. and F. Turner, Limited, for weighing off and mixing cut chaff and crushed corn in any desired proportions.

to a goods warehouse. The animals make no difficulty of ascending and descending the inclined ways which lead from one floor to another, the fodder and bedding being taken up by mechanical hoists. For the erection of its newest stables the Great Northern has utilised a piece of waste land situated over the entrance to one of its London tunnels, and here nearly 200 horses are accommodated in a handsome triangular range of one-storey buildings. This company has stables in London underground, on the level and with several floors, and its horses thrive equally well in each of these types of home. The great thing is to give plenty of space and air to each animal; of exercise they get enough in their daily work.

A succession of visits to railway companies' stables has convinced me that in the treatment of horses expert opinions differ as widely as on most other subjects. Some stables, for instance, are fitted with hanging bales between the stalls, others with fixed partitions; and the exponents of each system are equally convinced that theirs is better than the other. As regards bedding, the diversity of opinion amongst railway horse superintendents is still greater, some using straw, others sawdust, others chips and shavings, and others moss-litter—a compressed form of peat, which used to be almost exclusively imported from Denmark, but is now dug largely out of the Yorkshire moors in the neighbourhood of Goole, where, I am informed, a "Danish village" has recently sprung up, the workers in the local moss-litter industry having been imported from that country. A great consideration is the selling price obtainable for the manure, and this no doubt influences some companies to employ straw, though the prejudice formerly existing against moss-litter manure amongst farmers has nearly died out—indeed, some now think it has special qualities as a soil-dressing. Where a railway horse superintendent can obtain a large supply of sawdust or chips from his own company's carriage works at the bare cost of conveyance, there is, of course, an advantage in employing that form of bedding. The permanent-way department also sometimes makes its contribution to the stables by supplying old rails, which are used in various ways, especially for the construction of drains in the stalls. The stables themselves, too, are as a rule designed by the company's chief engineer and erected under his supervision.

Nor are stables by any means the only buildings which railway companies have found it necessary to erect for the purposes of their horse departments. Provender stores, shoeing forges, harness factories, and horse hospitals are all items of the extensive and varied plant required by our railways in their capacity as road carriers; and some of the best equipped buildings of these various kinds in the Kingdom are to be found amongst the heterogeneous property of railway shareholders. If the reader wishes to visit a place where the preparation of food for horses has been brought to the highest pitch of perfection, he cannot do better than ask permission from the Great Eastern Railway Company to visit their Provender Stores near Romford—an establishment which to the uninitiated in such matters is a revelation both of engineering skill and of the care which is bestowed upon the nourishment of that humble member of the brute creation—the carrier's horse.

When the visitor alights from the train at the siding adjacent to these Stores, it is difficult for him to believe that the major part of the huge building confronting him is devoted to the purposes of a horses' kitchen, where the raw material of provender—hay, clover, sanfoin, oats, and beans—is cut or crushed, cleaned, sifted, and measured, so as to form the chopped mixture upon which the 1,745 horses belonging to the Great Eastern Company are fed. It is like one of the celebrated pork factories of Chicago, where the pig goes in at one end and the sausages come out at the other. On one side the trusses of hay and the sacks of oats and beans are taken in, at the other side come out the bags of mixed provender; and with the exception of the men who unload and load up the trucks at the sidings—pulling the raw material out of one set of wagons and piling the sacks of provender into another set—no human hand touches the corn or chaff during its passage through the store. There are four floors to the big building, and each floor is occupied by a different set of machines—cutters, crushers, sifters, cleaners, weighers, and measurers. Here and there we find a man in attendance, but practically the whole thing is automatic. Conveyors of various types carry the stuff upwards from floor to floor—endless bands, worms and scoops, all driven by electric power—and by its own gravity it descends again through shoots of diverse shapes. Into each machine, as it continuously works, falls its due allowance of hay or corn or mixture, until the chaff, oats, and beans have been reduced to that combination and form of provender which experience has proved to be most acceptable to the palate and digestion of

Photo by] [*C. Pilkington.*

HORSES BATHING AT G. N. R. HOSPITAL.

An efficient aid in the treatment of foot troubles.

the hungry cart-horse. During the process rather more than one per cent. of the raw material is extracted in the form of dust, whilst every few minutes any nails, screws, pins, etc., which may have found their way into the ingredients, are sifted out by the magnet which unceasingly passes over the stream of provender at one point in its progress through this astonishing mechanical kitchen. Every week about 175 tons of provender are sent out from this Store, and the horse superintendent knows that every ounce of it is good, clean, nourishing food, freed from those gritty and metallic impurities which impair the digestions of the animals as surely as chalk or salt in water corrode the boiler of a steam engine. To Messrs. E. R. and F. Turner, Ltd., Engineers, of Ipswich, belongs the credit of having designed and supplied most of the machinery for the Great Eastern Company's Provender Stores. The Great Northern has a similar institution at Holloway, and the Great Western at Didcot; indeed, every one of our large railway companies has found it necessary to provide an establishment of the kind, and the Great Eastern's is specially mentioned here simply because it is the newest and therefore the most up-to-date in its mechanical appliances.

Notwithstanding the care taken in respect to food and stabling, and the fact that all the animals are in the prime of life, sickness amongst railway horses cannot be entirely prevented. The severity of their work, relieved though it be by frequent periods of rest, makes them specially liable to ailments of the feet and legs, whilst throat and lung troubles are also common, especially with those which work in towns. It is a noteworthy fact that almost all the young horses develop colds as soon as they arrive in town from the farms at which they have been bred. To provide accommodation for "seasoning" these recruits and for the treatment of the sick, every large railway company has its special range of hospital stables at its headquarters, and most of them also have a country convalescent home within easy distance of their principal horse depôt. The Great Northern's horse hospital—to again give one example typical of the rest—is situated within a mile of King's Cross, on an elevated, breezy site at the summit of that remarkable region north of the Euston Road which is given up almost entirely to the occupation of the three great trunk lines running from London to the North. Miles and miles of sidings—of the existence of which passengers by these lines know next to nothing—testify to the immensity of

the traffic in goods and coal which the needs of the Metropolis demand; and one can imagine that the young farm-horse, when he is discharged from the "box" in which he has performed his journey to town, feels as great a shock of surprise at the change in his surroundings as does the country bumpkin on emerging into the crowded streets from one or other of the great passenger termini near by. A few weeks' rest in one of the quiet, cosy stalls of the "reception stables" under the daily care of an experienced "vet." soon sets him on his "town legs"; indeed, this horse hospital in the heart of busy London is in some respects the counterpart of the farm from which he has come—so fragrant are the country smells, so homelike look its straw-yard and its ranges of well-filled stalls. Equally refreshing must this rural atmosphere be to the invalids—gathered here from all parts of the Great Northern system—who occupy a homely looking, two-storeyed range of stables forming the other wing of the hospital. Here every resource of veterinary science is at the service of the sick animals: even oxygen and chloroform are not denied them; while the arrangements for hydropathic treatment, if not so elaborate as at Matlock or Ilkley, are an efficient aid in the treatment of foot troubles. Even the "Turkish bath" is sometimes called into requisition for sweating sick horses, and at Totteridge, where the Great Northern has its convalescent home for horses, this was, until recently, part of the regular treatment in certain cases. Modern veterinary opinion, however, favours hot baths of the "Russian" variety, it having been found that horses sweat more freely under the application of steam than they do in a hot-air chamber.

Shoeing-forges and harness-making-shops are interesting auxiliaries to the horse departments of our railways. At small stations the shoeing is let out on contract, but at most large depôts the railway companies find it more economical to have their own forges. As to harness, horse-collars, and nosebags, the practice varies, but some companies make all these articles in shops of their own, with the aid of the most approved types of labour-saving machinery. At King's Cross I saw a stitching-machine in the harness shop, driven by electric power supplied from the lighting works at Holloway, which did in twenty minutes an amount of work which it would have taken a man a day to do by hand, whilst near by was another machine, with the help of which eighty provender sacks were being turned out in a day, as compared with fourteen a day before its introduction. In another room a man was engaged in making horse-collars. This is a highly skilled form of work which requires a long apprenticeship, but a skilled operator can turn out seven a week. As showing the care exercised to prevent waste, it is interesting to know that those parts of the stuffing used for railway carriages which would otherwise be thrown away are sent on to the horse department for use in the making of these collars. To prevent the horses' necks becoming galled, the collars in use are dried after each day's work, and each horse has its own collar set apart for it, so as to ensure an easy fit. No detail, in short, is thought too trivial, if it conduces to the health of the

Photo by] [*C. Pilkington.*

A HORSE AMBULANCE.

The Great Northern Railway Company's cart for the conveyance of sick horses.

animals or to economy in the work of the department.

The ordinary day's work of a railway cart-horse in town is thirteen hours; the average daily load moved per horse is two tons, and the average distance traversed is about twenty miles per day. Complaint is often made against railway carts that they block the streets in town by waiting about for long periods in front of offices and warehouses; and before the Royal Commission on London Traffic, now sitting, several witnesses have urged that railway companies ought to be prohibited from placing their receiving-offices in main thoroughfares, in consequence of the obstruction caused by the vans waiting outside these premises. It must not be forgotten, however, that a railway company is engaged in trade, and has an equal right with other traders to select the most suitable sites for carrying on its business. With equal force might it be contended that the existence of large and popular shops on important streets is an obstruction to traffic, as a great many vehicles stop outside these shops for long periods during business hours. In order to test this point, the authorities of the London and North-Western recently had statistics collected as to the number and duration of the stoppages of vehicles outside three of their London receiving-offices, as compared with those of the most frequented West End shops. It was found that not only did more vehicles stop at the shops than at the railway offices, but that they stopped considerably longer outside the former than the latter, the average duration being over ten minutes in the case of one of the shops, as compared with an average of from three to five minutes outside the receiving-offices. Yet no one thinks of suggesting that the big shops should be banished from the great thoroughfares in the interests of "rapid transit"!

Photo by [*C. Pilkington.*

A SERIOUS CASE IN HOSPITAL.

The G. N. R. Company's "Vet." administering oxygen to a horse suffering with pneumonia.

No doubt the competition which exists between railway companies in this country is responsible for a great many more vans being on the streets of our great towns than would be the case if goods and railway parcels, like letters and post-parcels, were all dealt with by one national organisation. On the other hand, competition promotes celerity. Were railway carriage of goods a monopoly, it is more than probable that the bulk of the work of collection and delivery would be performed by heavy, lumbering vans, horsed by two or more crawling animals, which would cause far more obstruc-

tion, team for team, than do the light, one-horse vans—always on the "trot" when the road is open to them—in which the bulk of railway cartage is now done in large towns. Heavy vans are, of course, employed for special branches of the work—and even traction-engines have to be hired for exceptional loads—but the tendency is becoming stronger every year to lighten the loads and reduce the tare of the vehicles, so as to secure the quickest possible despatch. The modern type of railway van is designed to move quickly, and the "crawler" amongst this class of vehicle is becoming a thing of the past.

The speed with which the town cartage work of railway companies has to be done has, up to the present, proved an insurmountable obstacle to the employment of motor-vehicles in place of horses and carts. This may seem at first sight a paradox, but a short explanation will make my meaning clear. At a large city goods station the consignments for delivery begin to arrive soon after midnight, and by 7.30, when the horses are ready for work, the porters have loaded, perhaps, 200 vans, which by 8 a.m. are all despatched upon their rounds. There are (say) another 200 vans still available, and the loading of these is at once taken in hand and completed about 10.30. About this time the first set of vans are beginning to return empty, and all that has to be done is to transfer the returned teams to the newly loaded vehicles and send them out again. Thus the same teams provide the motive power for a double set of vans. Having delivered their second loads, they take on collecting orders, and return to the station a second time with their vans loaded with "outwards" goods. Then the horses are taken to the stables and fed and rubbed down by the stable hands, while the drivers have their dinners. While this is taking place, the vans are being unloaded, and after dinner they can at once be taken out again for the afternoon collections. It will be readily seen that these arrangements would have to be entirely altered if motor-vehicles were employed, as the motors could not be detached from the vans, like the horses, to serve a double set of vehicles, and it would not pay to keep the motive machinery idle for long periods while the vans were being loaded and unloaded at the stations. In crowded streets a motor-vehicle has little advantage over a horse in point of speed, whilst for backing up to warehouses and standing at the angles often desirable in busy thoroughfares, it is less suitable than the horse-van with its simple fore-carriage and possible sideways position of the horse. The stabling and cleaning of motor-vehicles, and the storage of the many gallons of petrol required, would also be "hard nuts to crack," if the railway companies were to decide to substitute mechanical power for horse-propulsion in London and other great cities.

NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY STEAM MOTOR-WAGON.
The industrial salvation of villages.

In country districts, on the other hand, motor traction has already become a useful auxiliary of the railway; but even there its utility has proved very limited so far as the collection and delivery of goods are concerned. For comparatively heavy weights, conveyed between fixed points in regular loads, a motor-wagon with a "trailer" behind it is probably more economical than a pair-horse van or lorry, but such conditions only occur occasionally in railway work. The bulk of the business done, in country and in town, consists of the cartage of light loads, with a great deal of loading and unloading *en route* and consequently much waiting about. Under these conditions the weight carried per day per vehicle is very light, and the tendency is more and more against the employment of heavy vehicles except for special work. The sphere awaiting the motor is not so much in substitution for the horses and carts already employed, but as

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY MOTOR CHAR-À-BANC.

an alternative to the construction of a branch line to reach some place or places, a number of miles away from the railway, which are not adequately served under the established conditions. There is probably a good opening for automobilism to establish regular connections between our railways and some of the large villages which hitherto have been left "high and dry" at a distance of ten or twelve miles from the nearest station. A regular service both of passenger and goods motor-cars, run by the railway company and connecting with its trains, is likely to prove the industrial salvation of places thus circumstanced, and already several of the companies —notably the Great Western and the North-Eastern—have instituted some very interesting and praiseworthy experiments in this direction, which are being closely watched by the authorities of other lines. Should it fall to my lot in (say) ten years' time to write another article on "Railway Companies as Road Carriers," I have little doubt but that the motor-car will bulk very largely in its pages.

Photo by] [*Gibson and Sons, Penzance.*

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY MOTOR-'BUS.

AN ARTIST IN CIGAR-BANDS:

NEW DECORATIONS FOR OLD PLATES.

By Édouard Charles.

Illustrated from Photographs by Messrs. Clarke and Hyde

THAT the small, coloured band of paper which invariably encircles a cigar could serve any purpose beyond advertising the brand of smoke it bears the name of, hardly sounds feasible; and that it should be converted into the channel of decorative art, seems unlikely.

Almost ever since postage-stamps were invented, it has been a popular hobby with many people to decorate, with used specimens of no value, plates, drinking-glasses, pin-trays—in short, all sorts of nick-nacks: and some, in their desire to create a novelty, have even gone so far as to cover rooms with them instead of ordinary wall-paper, and plaster them over suites of furniture. Indeed, so popular a pastime did this work become that stamp-covered articles have long since ceased to attract attention on account of their rarity; and now the stamp, as an article of decorative purpose, has given place to the humble cigar-band.

SHIELD COVERED WITH CIGAR-BANDS: DESIGN IN CENTRE MADE FROM PAPER OFF CIGAR-BOXES.

The cigar-band does not, at first sight, seem to lend itself to this use as readily as the stamp, but a little consideration shows that it really is quite as adaptable to the purpose. There are hundreds of varieties of bands on the market, differing in size, shape, and colour, and by them a common dinner-plate or a drinking-glass can be converted into a striking and beautiful article to decorate a cabinet or the wall.

Several specimens of objects decorated with cigar-bands illustrate this article, and a close regard of the different photographs will make clear the possibility of cigar-band decoration, which can be taken up as a pleasing and profitable hobby by those who have time on their hands. And it recommends itself as being eminently suitable work for members of the gentler sex, especially those in whom the artistic sense is at all pronounced.

For those who would engage in the work, the first essential, naturally, is a large and very varied assortment of cigar-bands. How these can be obtained, it is scarcely necessary to point out. If you are a smoker of cigars, you carefully save every band; if you are not, you have, no doubt, many friends who are; and you can, of course, induce a tobacconist or two to collect them for you. It is only necessary for him to allow you to place on the counter, behind the cigar-cutter, a small box with a card inviting all and sundry smokers kindly to drop in the bands off their cigars. Mr. Sammé, the gentleman who executed the plaque, plates, and vases illustrated here, was in the fortunate position of a cigar-seller, and consequently found little trouble in securing all the bands he wanted, though there were even people who insisted on retaining the bands—thinking they were not getting full value for their money otherwise!

The bands secured, they will be found to be gummed, and, of course, they must be flattened out without damage to the ends. To attempt just to tear the ends apart is generally fatal, and the best way of performing the work is to soak the bands for a few moments in warm water, after which they are easily unjoined. Then they can be flattened and dried between sheets of blotting-paper; but care must be taken to remove all the gum, or they will be found to adhere to the pad. When they are perfectly dry, they are ready for use.

A FINISHED PLATE.

It looks, and is, an easy thing to stick cigar-bands on a plate; but it is not so simple a matter to execute the design determined upon, and no satisfactory result would be secured if the plate were not ruled off first into equal proportions, whose dimensions are governed by the size of the plate. This, however, presents no difficulty, as will be readily gathered from the photograph of a plate in course of completion. The lines are best made in ink with a pen.

PLATE WITH PHOTOGRAPH IN CENTRE.

A ROYAL PLAQUE.
Composed by Mr. Gustave Bodé.

First, the design to be carried out must be decided upon, the different colours selected and sorted out into separate heaps. Thus the paint-box, so to speak, is ready; some paste, a brush, a pair of scissors, a ruler, pen and ink, and a white plate complete the outfit necessary.

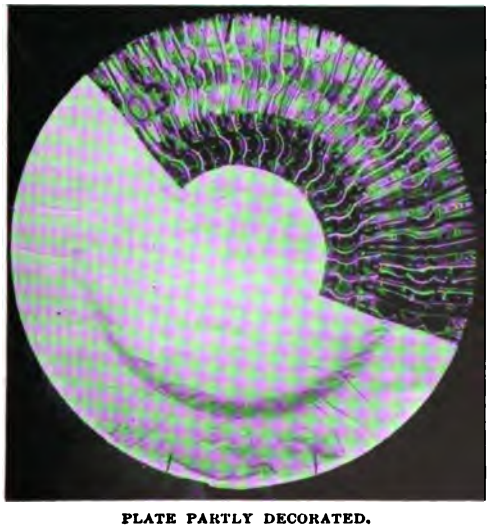


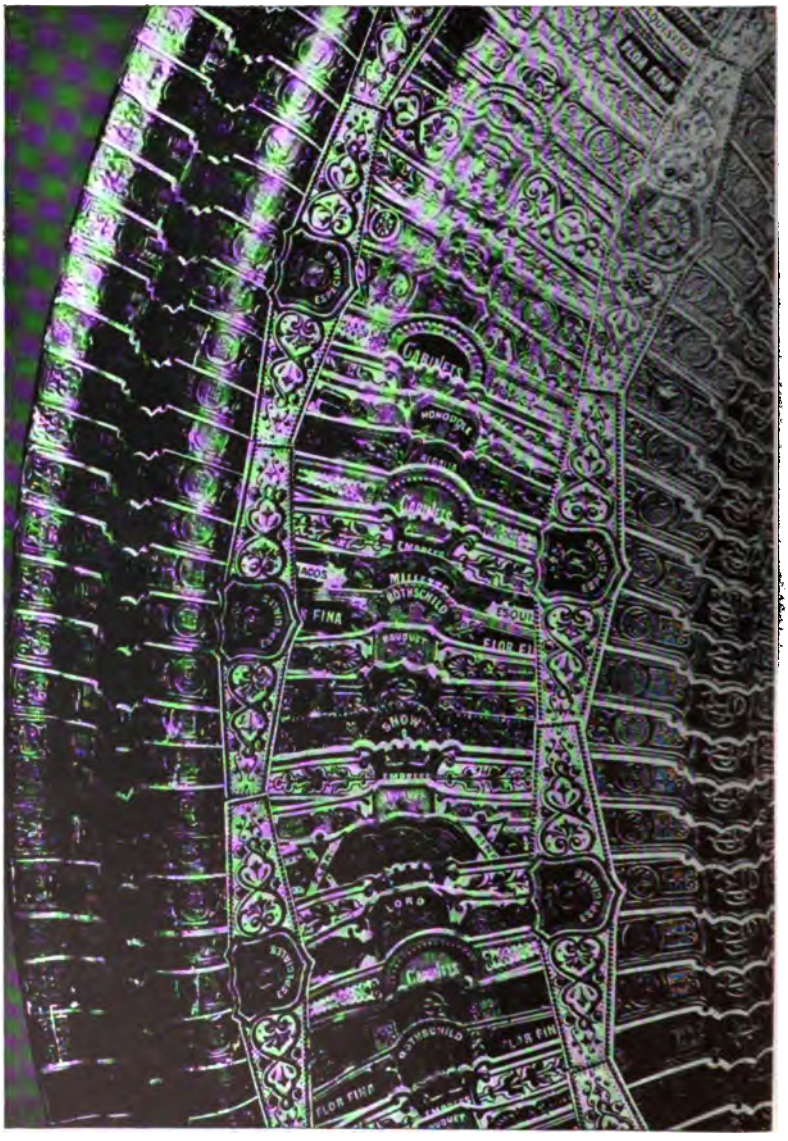
PLATE PARTLY DECORATED.

Each of the partitions will necessarily accommodate the same number of bands; and the design is commenced from the edge of the plate and continued around its circumference. At the edge, each section will take three or four of the bands, these being affixed so that their centres overlap and the colour of the plate beneath is completely

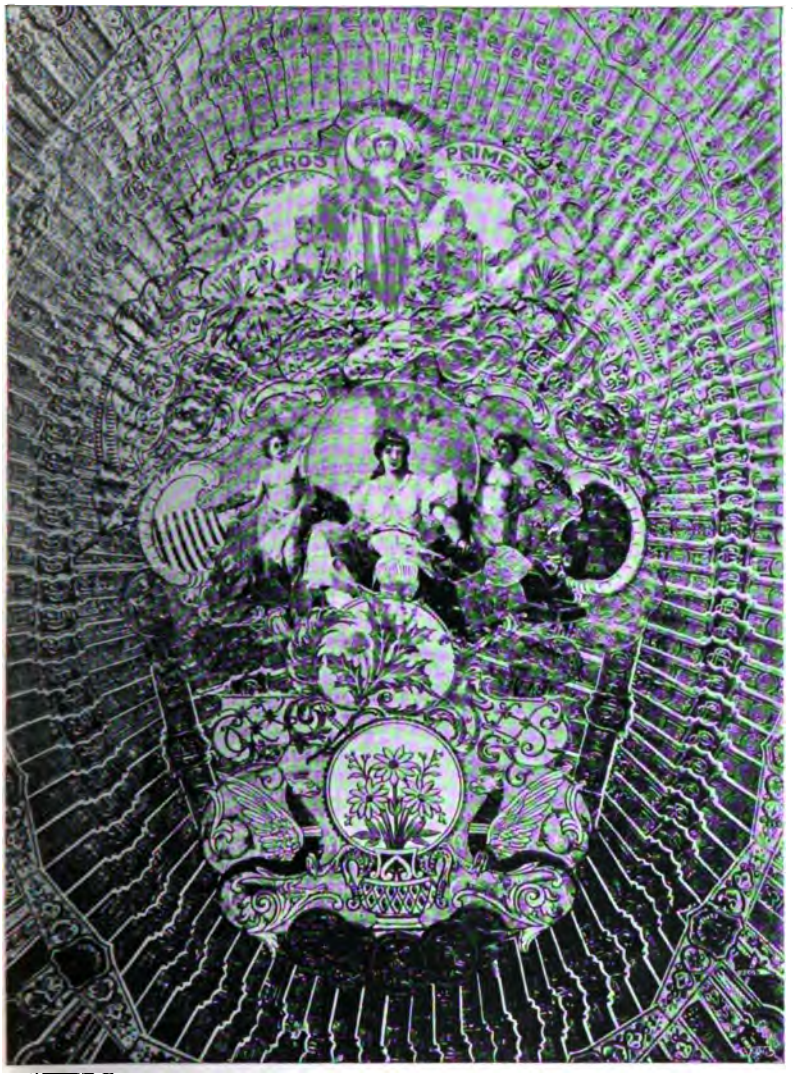
hidden from sight. To make the first circle, bands whose centres are bright red may be selected. Then, what will count as the third series of bands, lying towards the centre and joining ends with the first circle, must be laid down, and these also may be of the same design. This circle completed, the second one is fixed into place; but here the bands follow the circumference of the plate in their lengths, and thus they hide the joining of the two sets of bands pointing towards the centre, and at the same time go to the making of the design as a whole. For this series you choose, of course, a band decidedly different in colour, possibly with a centrepiece of gold and having gold edges.

You will, of course, have previously decided upon the centrepiece—a picture of some sort cut from the paper of a cigar-box. When the design in the bands has been sufficiently completed towards the centre of the plate, the picture is pasted down, just going over the fringe of the last row of bands, so that the plate beneath is completely hidden. Finished, now, it only requires to be lightly varnished ere being set on shelf or hung on wall.

There is no difficulty about the making of such plates or the covering of any article, given a fair share of patience and some sense of the artistic, for naturally the beauty of the work lies in the perfection of its performance and the blending of the various colours. The matter of design is one that must rest entirely with the artist, and upon it will depend, of course, the manner in which he will piece the bands together; but the plate to be worked on must always be scaled out first, and the design started always from the edge. As to the time required, that will naturally be governed by the worker's skill and the elaborateness of the subject; while simple things can be done in a few hours, ambitious ones require days. Nor is it to be expected that perfection will crown



PORTION OF SHIELD SHOWING HOW BANDS ARE LAID ON.



DESIGN IN CENTRE OF SHIELD MADE UP OF VARIOUS PAPERS FROM CIGAR-BOXES.

first results. They will in all probability be decidedly disappointing, but improvement will come with practice.

More difficult than plaques and plates to handle satisfactorily are glasses and vases, owing, of course, to the difference of shape, and with these it is more than ever necessary to scale the work out before commencing it. Some very striking designs can be executed on glasses, which, when finished, make very unique vases.

Although from our illustrations some idea of what the articles look like can be obtained, the photographs fail to demonstrate their chief charm, since the colours are missing, and to appreciate their beauty to the full it is necessary to see the actual plates and vases. Their maker, Mr. Sammé, of the "Perseverance" Tavern, Robsart Street, Brixton, will be pleased to show them to any reader who may care to inspect them, or a handsome plate, such as that shown in another photograph, can be purchased for a few shillings.

The *chef d'œuvre* of the collection possessed by Mr. Sammé is that illustrated on page 318. It is an oval-shaped tin, measuring some two feet by two and a half feet, and into its composition several hundreds of cigar-bands have entered. The tableau in the centre is not merely one picture, but composed of several parts cut out from the linings of different cigar-boxes. Seen in all its beautiful colouring, it really is a handsome piece of work, and so carefully executed that it is next to impossible to detect the joins. The precision and exactitude with which the bands have been set in place will be apparent from the photograph of a part of the design, and the cleverness of the composition of the centrepiece is disclosed by our large photograph of that subject.

As a curiosity, this plaque is unique, being in all probability the largest ever made; and it is easy to understand its owner's pride in this specimen of his own handicraft, as also that large monetary offers have failed to induce him to part from it.

Another photograph shows a set of three

vases in the decoration of which cigar-bands form a prominent part. The vases are made entirely of paper—brown paper stiffened on the interior with cardboard ribs. Of the set, the centre one is the most elaborate, and the detail of the decoration of its neck and lid in cigar-bands will be seen to be particularly effective.

There is always a demand for such articles as are here described, by those in search of novelties, and consequently the work presents an excellent opportunity for those who take a fancy to its niceties of composition to fill in their spare time with a light labour that has a distinct value in its results.

THREE VASES, MADE OF PAPER, DECORATED WITH CIGAR-BANDS.

TWILIGHT.

A RED sun low in a golden west,
Long light on the gliding swells,
White gulls a-wing o'er the water's breast,
And the toll of the harbour bells;

Wide reaches of gloom on the ocean's rim,
Weird glow on the cabin panes,
Strange figures a-stir in the shadows dim
And a light in the anchor chains.

Fast pales the glow in the glooming west;
Deep shadows and evening star.
The gull sleeps well in her lonely nest—
And night creeps up from the bar.

PAGE HARLAN.

THE BOY WHO DIDN'T CATCH THINGS.

BY MARY HEATON VORSE.*

IT was Jimmie Bates's stigma that "he'd never had anything." The boys taunted him with it.

"Huh! you ain't had nuthin'."

"I got an awful bee sting; ma said she never see a worse one!"

"Bee stings ain't anything—all you got to do's stand near a bee's nest. Your ma *said* you ain't ever caught a thing."

"Jimmie."

"I had *eve'ything*," said Lizzie Crowell proudly.

"Yes, she's had everything, an' she's only four."

"She ain't had the whoopin'-cough——"

"She's had measles an' mumps an' chicken-pox an' scarlatina," said her elder sister proudly.

Jimmie slunk away. He was nearly eight, and Lizzie, only half his age, a baby, a girl baby, had had everything. To add to his shame, his mother bragged about it to visitors.

"No, Jimmie don't catch things," she would say proudly. "No, Mrs. Blake, not even measles. All the other children had it, an' *of course*, I 'spected nothing but what Jimmie'd come down, too. Isolate him? No, *ma'am*. I don't believe in such foolishness. If you got one child down with measles, might as well have the hull bilin' of 'em get it and be done. Why, seems like Jimmie *can't* catch things! Stop pullin' my dress an' pinchin' me, Jimmie. Land sakes! You act like a moskeeter, pinchin' me that way. As I was sayin', he ain't ever had a *thing*. What does the child want? Didn't I *tell* you not to pinch me like that? He was an awful hard teether. I walked with *him*, I tell you, day an' night. I always did say that hard teethin' children wasn't so liable to get things."

"I was an awful hard teether," Jimmie reported to the boys.

"What's teethin'?" said Fred Crowell. "My little sister jest hollers with her teeth, an' she got the measles so quick."

"Well, mebbe I'll get everythin' yet, an' I won't have to go to school a hull term, p'r'aps—'tain't no use havin' things when you're too little to go to school, anyway."

This sounded like sense, but Jimmie felt his deficiency. It was only the week after that, that the oldest Crowell girl raised her hand after prayers and said—

"Please, Miss Williams, ma says please excuse Fred. He's got the measles."

"Why, Libby, didn't Fred have the measles three years ago?"

"Yes'm," said Libby, with subdued pride. "Ma says we mostly get measles *twict* in our family!"

It was when school was out that Jimmie went to visit Aunt Jane at the other end of the village.

"What you coughin' about, Jimmie?" asked his aunt. "Don't you feel well?"

"No'm, m' head aches an' I feel queer. Guess I'd better go home."

"Hear the child!" exclaimed Aunt Jane. "You waltz right in the settin'-room an' don't you stir. You got a fever," she said,

"'I had eve'ything!'"

* Copyright, 1904, by Mary Heaton Vorse, in the United States of America.

feeling his head. "You been lookin' real peaked the last few days, anyhow."

"I want to go back to ma," complained Jimmie.

"You're not goin' a step, Jimmie Bates. You look like you was comin' down with sumpthin'. You ain't goin' home to expose your six-weeks-old sister. You hear *me*."

"I don't never catch things," said Jimmie with pessimism. "I wanter go home."

* * * * *

"Yes, doctor," said Aunt Jane. "He's feverish an' got the headache, an' no appetite, an' he coughs awful."

Jimmie clutched the edge of the table. His cough racked him, and it ended with an unmistakable long-drawn "whoo-oop."

"The whoopin'-cough!" said Aunt Jane. "I thought so."

"Unmistakably the whooping-cough," agreed the doctor.

"Goody! Have I got sumpin' catchin'?" asked Jimmie, tears in his eyes from coughing.

"Yes, you hev, an' got it bad, too," snapped Aunt Jane.

One advantage of Aunt Jane's was that it was on the street. You could get at the "fellers," and be off with little danger of being called back. As soon as Aunt Jane's back was turned, Jimmie sneaked off to the Crowells', three houses distant. He felt miserable, but satisfaction was stronger than sickness. He had had no such feeling of greatness since he went into knickerbockers.

He strolled into the kitchen. Libby was helping with the dishes. Lizzie was playing

"'What's teethin'?'"

on the floor. Fred was loafing about, other Crowells ran in and out.

"I got the whoopin'-cough!" announced Jimmie proudly.

All work stopped. Jimmie was surprised to see Libby seize Lizzie and disappear; and Mrs. Crowell, the gentlest of women, turned on him with—

"You get out o' here! What you mean comin' an exposin' my children?"

"Don't you come near me! I don't want your old cough," warned Fred.

"Keep back, children! don't come here!" shouted Mrs. Crowell. "What you standin' there for, Jimmie? Are you *dumb?*" and as Jimmie began to cough, she lifted him up and carried him out of the door. "Now you march right along of me back to your Aunt Jane's. Keep back, Jennie Lee! Jimmie's got the whoopin'-cough!" she cried, warning off a little girl who scurried down the street.

"Whoopin'-cough or no whoopin'-cough, I'll learn you to go an' expose a hull family!" said Aunt Jane grimly, as she took a menacing hair-brush from her bureau.

"Jimmie was surprised to see Libby seize Lizzie and disappear."

Jimmie felt injured. After this experience, no more Crowells for him, and they more than anyone else were always "catching things" and making him feel small. There were other more sympathetic persons to brag to—guess ma couldn't say any more: "Seems 's if Jimmie *couldn't* get things." Meantime Aunt Jane kept a suspicious eye on him.

"Hev I gotter sit on this stoop all day?" whined Jimmie.

"Yes, you hev."

"When can I go home?"

"You can't go home under two months, Jimmie Bates, so you make up your mind to be patient. It's a real mean, tedious disease, Jimmie," she added kindly.

Later, when Aunt Jane went "up street," Jimmie strolled out of the yard. Sammy Perkins, his particular chum, was careering down the street, evidently bound for Jimmie's.

"Hello, Sam! I got the whoopin'-cough!" said Jimmie importantly.

Sam backed away, and his face fell.

"I whooped fierce this mornin'," continued Jimmie with relish.

"Don't come nigh *me!*" said Sammy, backing still farther away. "I'll catch it——"

"Why, don't you want ter catch it?" said Jimmie.

"You must be silly," said Sam with scorn. "Naw! I don't want ter be shut up fur weeks." And he made off.

And Sammy had always bragged about the things he had had.

Jimmie crept dolefully into the house. His world was withdrawing from him, and, more than this, he felt he had been fooled. His illusions were crushed, and Aunt Jane, from an indulgent aunt, had turned into a relentless gaoler.

"I guess I'd better go to bed an' have ma come and nurse me," said Jimmie.

"Why, Jimmie, how you talk! Your ma nurse you, and her hands full with a baby! You don't need nursing any more'n I do. You stay out in the fresh air."

This was the death of the last illusion. No nursing. No people coming to inquire in hushed voices. No flowers and jellies sent in. Nothing but solitude on Aunt Jane's stoop, and a horrid medicine poured down every two hours.

Jimmie wanted his mother. He knew that only babies like Gil cried for their mothers, but he didn't care. He succumbed to that weakness boldly. Aunt Jane felt so for him that she scolded him severely to hide her emotion. After three days, which seemed weeks long, he resolved to go home. He sneaked cautiously out of the yard and cut across lots.

He finally reached home and came into the yard. Everything looked homelike and inviting. His sister Jane was feeding the chickens. Under the "ellum" tree sat his mother, rocking his baby sister. Even Gil, his little brother, whose puerile games Jimmie usually scorned, seemed an enviable playfellow. Jimmie began to trot up the yard.

"'I got the whoopin'-cough!'"

"Why, ma, here's Jimmy!" screamed Jane.

To Jimmie's horror, his mother, the baby in her arms, ran for the house.

"Don't come nigh *me!*" called Gil, as he and Jane made for the kitchen and slammed the door.

If Jimmie had known what a leper was, he would have said he felt like one. He flung himself down on the grass and wept. He didn't care who saw him. Even his mother

had gone back on him. Pa, coming from behind the barn, saw the desolate Jimmie.

"Stop cryin'," he said gently, "an' come with me."

"I ain't gotter go back to Aunt Jane's, hev I?" wailed Jimmie.

"Listen, Jimmie," said his father. "If your little sister was to catch the whoopin'-cough now, she might *die*. I'll hev to take you back."

So Jimmie, the outcast, and his father proceeded gently down the street. The sense of having been made a fool of by the boys, when they led him to suppose that "catching things" was desirable, had gone, and the sense of injury had gone. He felt alone in all the world, a sick child, whose mother even had cast him off.

"People die o' whoopin'-cough, don't they?" he asked his aunt, with gloomy hopefulness.

"Don't you fret, *you* ain't goin' to die," returned his aunt cheerfully.

Jimmie's heart sank; there were to be eight to ten more weeks of this (the doctor might as well have said years), and he hadn't a chance of dying.

"At Miss Hathaway's."

After an endless week the recklessness of despair seized Jimmie, and under Aunt Jane's nose he ran away. He didn't care where. He heard her panting behind him and calling, and he dodged in up the driveway of the Hathaway place, stubbed his toe, and fell; his cough seized him, and he lay crying in hopeless defeat, his head buried in the grass. He heard his aunt's voice say—

"I'm real sorry, Miss Hathaway. He's been a bad boy. He run away, an' he's got the whoopin'-cough."

"Nobody comes near me," sobbed Jimmie. "Ma won't have me near the house. The boys run away from me."

Then he heard the voice of Miss Hathaway, whom all the boys feared, who had enviable garden and stables and collie pups, say—

"Poor little chap! Why can't he come here and play every day, Mrs. Woodin? There are no children. I had a forlorn time with whooping-cough myself once."

As Jimmie wended his way to the Hathaway place next day, Sam called to him: "What you doin' out er your Aunt Jane's yard?"

"I'm goin' to spend the day at Miss Hathaway's," said Jimmie. "She *likes* folks with whoopin'-cough."

"I guess—I guess I'll come, too," said Sammy. "Guess you're over the ketchin'est part."

"Oh, no, I ain't," said Jimmy grimly. "If you come with me, Sammy, I'll *whoop* at you."

At the end of many weeks, just in time for the autumn term, Jimmie was again restored to his own. His manner was supercilious. When Sammy tried to say something about measles being more important than "whoopin'-cough, 'cause you were sick a-bed," he turned fiercely—

"If anyone tries to rig me 'bout not hevin' things catchin', I'll punch 'em—Miss Hathaway's coachman showed me; you fellers all lied to me. I'm glad I don't get things; and don't you forget it, Sammy Perkins, I'll punch you if you say 'Measles' to me!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

DE TROP.

HOST: I wish to goodness you'd go away, waiter!
WAITER: Excuse me, sir, but I'm responsible for the silver.

UNCLE ABNER ON KICKING.

WHAT you got to kick about?
Ain't your limbs all good an' stout?
Ain't you got two big, strong hands
To enforce your mind's commands?
Ain't you got a lot o' health—
Better'n piles an' piles o' wealth?
Let's sit down an' figger out
What you've got to kick about.

Say you ain't a chump? Well, then,
Better off than some fool men.
Hear all right an' got good eyes?
Them air things you ort to prize.
Got a stummick, lungs an' heart
Purty good in every part?
Say, I'm jest chock-full o' doubt
What you've got to kick about.

Makes me fightin' mad to see
Men as blest as they can be
Go a-growlin' round as though
Life is all a cloud of woe;
Lookin' sulky all the while
When there ort to be a smile.
Come! let's try to figger out
What you've got to kick about.

Nixon Waterman.

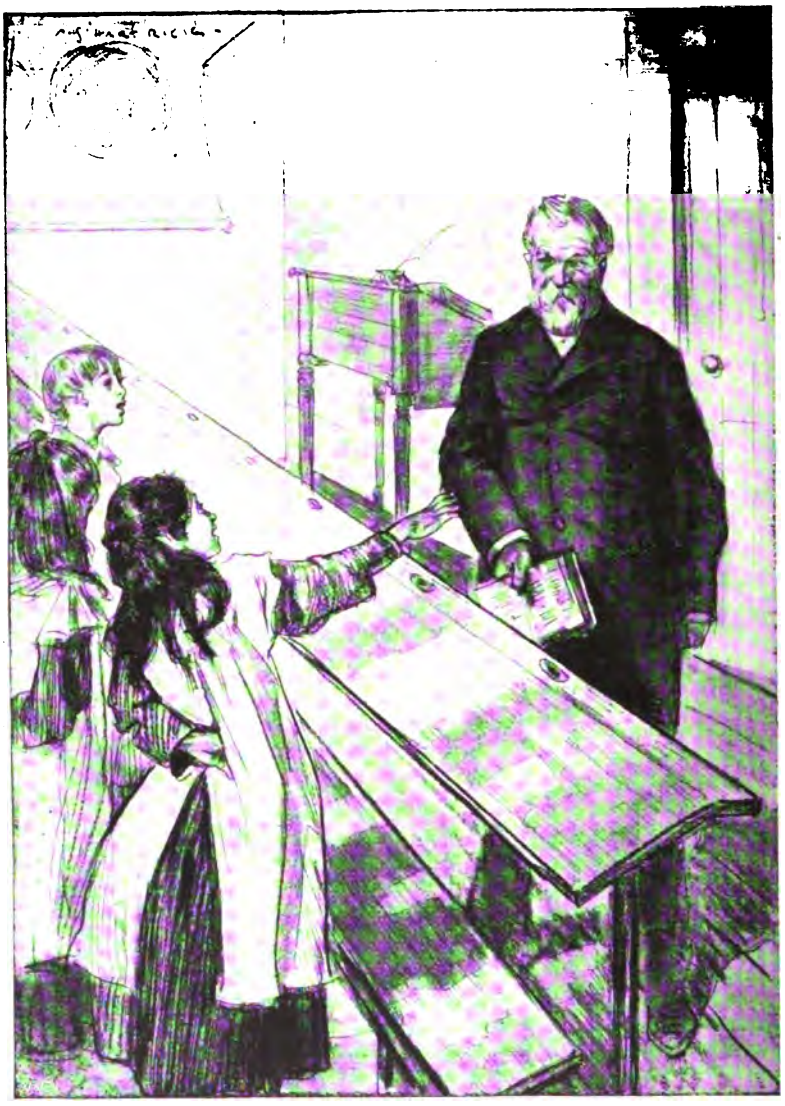
MAMIE: Did he say he thought I was pretty?
FLORA: I didn't like to ask him. You were singing at the time.

ETHEL: Did Maud ever get a prize at croquet?
EDITH: Well, she thought so until she married him.

THE young man had seen the play before He let everybody for four seats around him know that, and he kept telling just what was coming on, and just how funny it would be when it did come. He had a pretty girl with him, and he was trying to amuse her. At length he said: "Did you ever try listening to a play with your eyes shut? You've no idea how queer it seems." A middle-aged man, with a red face, sat just in front. He twisted himself about in his seat and glared at the young man. "Young man," said he, "did you ever try listening to a play with your mouth shut?" The silence that followed was almost painful.

AT LAST!

HE: I wonder what time it is?
SHE: Really I cannot say.
HE: Well, it must be about time that I was going nome.
SHE: Oh—it's much later than that!



A NEW DEFINITION.

EXAMINER: What is an undergraduate?
SHARP LITTLE GIRL (with vague memories of "Nature Study" classes): Please, sir! it's a funny little hanimal what lives underground!

"How are you, Mr. Parkins, this inclement weather?"

"Just managing to keep out of the undertaker's hands."

"Oh! I am sorry to hear that."

"I BELIEVE he had two sons: one of them was lost at sea, and the other became a Member of Parliament."

"And, of course, neither of them was heard of afterwards?"

FIRST OFFICER: Yes; we were marching over a plank bridge when it gave way, and the men fell in.

SECOND OFFICER: And what did you do?

FIRST OFFICER: Oh! I ordered them to fall out.

"WHAT'S the hurry?"

"I've just bought a hat for my wife, and I want to get it home before the fashion changes."

WIFE: What do you think of Bridget's cooking?

HUSBAND: I think if she tried to boil water, she'd burn it.

THE little girl who wrote on her examination papers: "The interior of Africa is principally used for purposes of exploration," was wiser than she thought.

NEW CHAPLAIN OF LUNATIC ASYLUM (to patient): Well, what did you think of my sermon to-day?

PATIENT: I like you better than the other chap.

NEW CHAPLAIN: Why?

PATIENT: Because you are more like us!

COUNTRY WOMAN: How much for children's portraits?

ITINERANT PHOTOGRAPHER: Five shillings a dozen, madam.

COUNTRY WOMAN: Why—er—I've only got nine!

"HAVE you been through the British Museum?"

"Oh, yes."

"What did you think of it?"

"Pretty poor. Why, they've got the same things there they had last year."

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU!"

"Do you mean to tell me that you're tired of my coming to see you?"

"No, not at all. I am hoping you'll find it out without my having to tell you."

"I HAVE just heard of your marriage. Did you make a good match?"

"I believe that our two families have not decided yet."

TEACHER: What is a fort?

PUPIL: A place for soldiers to live in.

TEACHER: And a fortress?

PUPIL: A place for soldiers' wives to live in.

"YOU appear to be very fond of Wagner's music?"

"I am indeed. I began life living next to a boiler factory, and it reminds me of my youth."

PERHAPS.

"Don't you have a scarecrow in your field?"
"No, sir."
"Is that 'cos you're always here?"

THE PERSECUTED HERO.

THERE, close the book. The tale is done;
It is a fearsome tale, indeed—
A tale one would he'd not begun,
But once begun he needs must read,
Must hurry on from page to page
With cruelty to rouse his fears—
With this first act to rouse his rage:
"She poured her stories in his ears!"

Poor hero! He was brave and strong,
And made of nerve, you may be sure,
Or else her course of hurtful wrong
He had not managed to endure.
We read how he, upon the street,
Was given not the slightest chance
For life. The girl he thought so sweet—
"She froze him with a haughty glance!"

An iceberg, in her wake he floats
Page after page, all coldly dumb,
While she with keenest pleasure gloats
To see him, helpless, hopeless, come.
Until at last this luckless wight,
The siren managed once to meet.
What then? Why, then this awful blight:
"She scorched him with her scornful speech!"

Poor hero! This was woeful work!
A shameful way to treat the man—
To hurl him, with a heartless jerk,
From icebox to the roasting-pan.
What followed? Let us find the place—
The corner's turned, the page to mark.
First frozen, then the heat—now trace:
"He melted softly in the dark!"

So, close the book. The tale is told.
They called it "happy," "up to date,"
But it must make the blood run cold
To read of this man and his fate.
Poor hero! It was ever thus!
Man's destiny is stern and grim.
Hold! Here are further shocks for us.
The ending is: "She married him!"

W. D. Nesbit.

"My baby cries all night. I don't know what to do with it."

"I'll tell you what I did. As soon as our baby commenced to cry, I used to turn on all the gas. That fooled him. He thought it was broad daylight and went to sleep."

THE INCREDIBLE.

TOMKINS (who has been dragged out an hour before sunrise, and has not yet seen a single duck to shoot): D-d-don't you think it's about t-t-time we went h-h-home to breakfast?

ENTHUSIASTIC FRIEND: Home! Why, man, anyone would think you were not enjoying yourself!

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THE RETURN OF "SHE,"

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

THE Y.M.C.A. P415.6

THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1905

LONDON

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VOL 21

No. 122

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The Windsor Magazine.

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THE

KEELEY TREATMENT

For the Cure of Alcohol and Drug Inebriety.

THE Keeley treatment has been employed in this country for many years under the auspices of a Committee of broad-minded men of affairs, who have satisfied themselves, by personal investigation, of the efficacy of the Cure. This Committee is composed of the following gentlemen, the Chairman being the Rev. James Fleming, B.D., Canon of York, Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty the King; Mr. W. Hind-Smith, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations, Exeter Hall, London; Lord Braye; Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who keep in constant touch with the operations of the Keeley Institute. Here are some facts from prominent men regarding the Keeley Cure for the Drink and Drug Habit.

"It really cures. It does what it professes to do." Such is the emphatic testimony of Mr. Eardley-Wilmot, the well-known secretary of the Church of England Temperance Society, who for some years has had the Keeley method under close observation in this country. He adds: "I do not wish to use high-flown language, but really and truly I look upon the Keeley cure as a modern miracle." And then he tells how case after case that had been considered hopeless has yielded speedily to the Keeley Cure, the patients returning to their work full of vigour, and happy in the restoration of all that makes life worth living.

He has sent bad cases which his Society were unable to deal with.

Furthermore, Mr. W. Hind-Smith, of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations, declares that in his opinion, after ten years of constant service on the investigating Committee of the Keeley Cure, it is the only effective cure for chronic alcoholism and drug addiction of which he is aware.

Why does the inebriate continue to drink? He drinks because he is a slave of alcohol. He is no more responsible for drinking—when a drunkard—than a man is for having a chill or fever when he is poisoned by malaria. The Inebriate will stop drinking for a few days, or weeks, or months, perhaps. You may say then, Why not stop continuously? But this is a law of the disease of alcoholism. A man may have an attack of ague, and may then go two days, or a week, or two or three weeks, or even a year, without a paroxysm. You may say, If a man can throw off the disease for a week, or a month, or a year, why can't he do so continuously? The reason he can't is because the nature of the disease is to cause these paroxysms periodically. If the malarial disease is cured, the paroxysms will cease for ever, and the same law is found to hold good with alcoholism.

The man so diseased will continue to drink rhythmically. His persistence in drinking is a part of, and a main part of, his disease. Can we make it clear and plain to you why a drunkard will continue to drink in spite of everybody and everything good? I think if we examine the laws of disease relating to the action of poisons, and compare them with similar laws in the physical and mental world, that we can make the question and its answer plainly understood.

It is true that his disease is caused by alcohol; but it is also true that in this disease, when once it is established, alcohol is a necessity. The Inebriate is diseased because he drank whisky with his friends, or socially, or took it as a medicine, or for any reason whatever that caused him to begin drinking; but he continues to drink because his disease DEMANDS alcohol.

Persons prevent epidemics by fighting their rhythmical returns. They combat disease by interposing remedies which break up the settled rhythms of chill and fever.

Right here is the secret of the cure of inebriety. The chronic inebriate acquires a resistance to alcohol when he has a drunken bout. His family, friends, his will, and his tissue cells resist it. All these things make such an impression on his mind that he stops drinking for a while. But these resisting forces lose their power in time, and then the clamour of tissue cells for alcohol is again predominant, and he goes off again on another spree.

From this standpoint a drunkard is made up of the rhythmical predominance of all the forces which lead him to drink, and of the forces which prevent him from drinking. If all these forces could remain equal, he would be naturally cured; but they never remain equal. The Keeley remedy breaks up this rhythm. It puts the inebriate into an entirely new sphere, externally and internally. It is very like, and just as effectual as giving a man who has the ague a quantity of quinine and a change of climate. It breaks up the regular swing of the pendulum which ticks against sobriety at one extreme and into debauchery at the other.

The principles of it are easily explained. The man or woman upon whom has fallen the disease of intemperance goes to the Keeley Institute as he or she would go to any hospital or nursing-home. They go of their own free will, or they are not admitted. If they do not wish to be cured, the administrators of the Institute will have none of them. Even when they consent to come, they are left free agents to go in and out at will, so long as they are there at stated hours of the day when the treatment is administered.

The treatment takes four weeks, and is carried out in the United Kingdom only at the Keeley Institute, 8 and 9, West Bolton Gardens, London, S.W. It consists of hypodermic injections four times a day, and Dr. Keeley's remedies, which are taken every two hours during the day.

At the beginning of the treatment the patient is provided with a proper amount of the best whisky, if he desires it; or, if the addiction be in the category of drugs, the accustomed dose is allowed, but after two or three days the old craving for alcohol disappears for good and all; for drugs it takes longer.

About one-third of the patients are ladies, all of whom have apartments outside the Institute, of their own selection.

A discerning British public appreciates hard facts. The published Annual Reports of Canon Fleming's Committee can be had for the asking. These reports are highly interesting, containing, as they do, authentic information as to the cures effected, whether the trouble had been alcoholism, morphinism, or nervous prostration.

Some of the patients had been victims to the drink or drug habit for very many years. Cures are the rule, and, what is more, they are permanent. Among the patients are physicians, lawyers, clergymen, journalists, and men generally who do the brain work of the world.

Any inquiries should be addressed to The Secretary, 9, West Bolton Gardens, in Old Brompton Road, London, S.W., which is the only address.

This is the only Keeley Institute in the British Isles.

[*Facing back of plate.*

ST. CECILIA.

By J. M. STRUDWICK.

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"A RESCUE AT DAWN." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.
From the picture in the possession of Mr. J. H. Balfour Browne, K.C.

THE MASTER OF THE NEWLYN SCHOOL

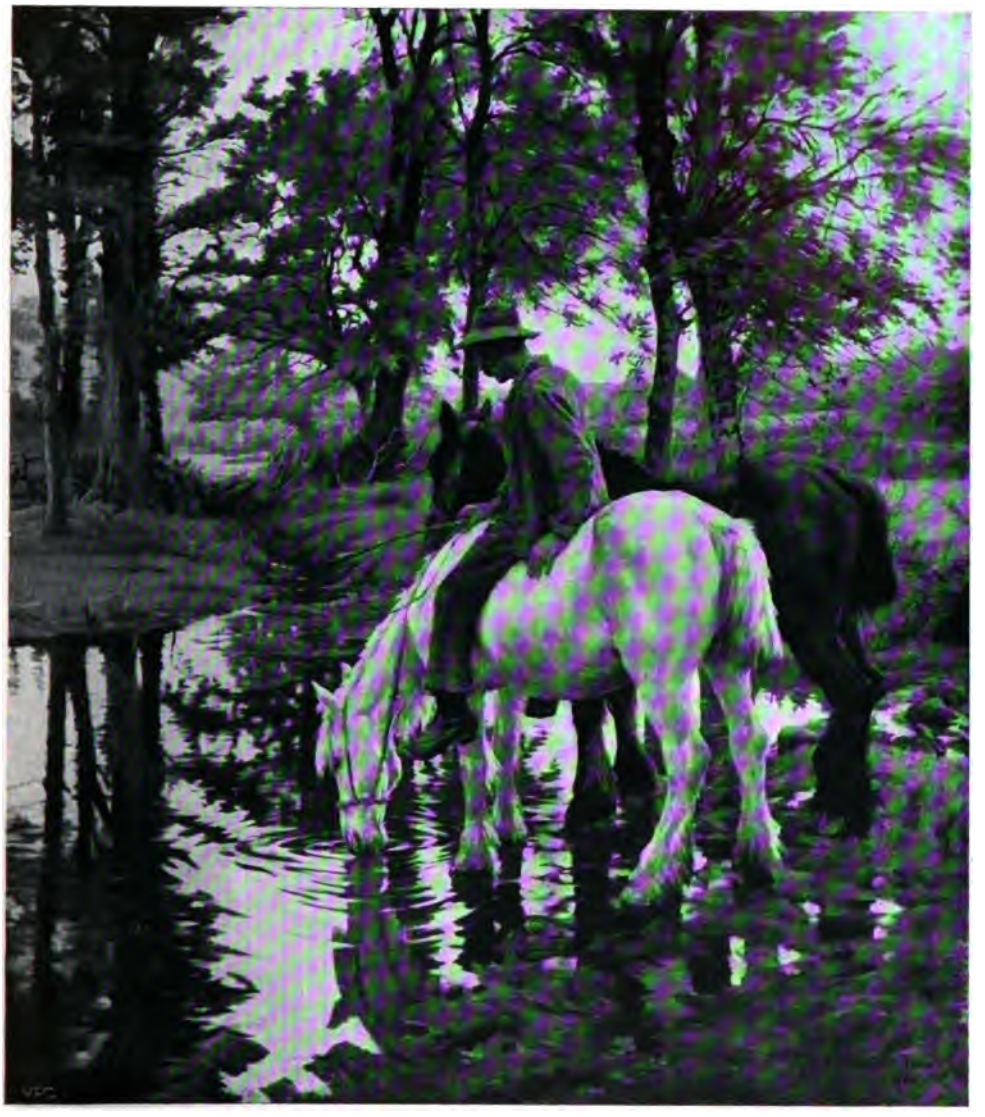
MR. STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A., AND HIS PICTURES.

By Wilfrid Meynell.

"FAR be it from me to belittle the talent of these young men; but I quarrel with their choice of subject. Art is concerned with everlasting beauty. They paint the first thing they see. Frankly, they paint platitudes." The words were spoken by Lord Leighton one Sunday afternoon in that palace of art which itself illustrated the President's words by its sacrifice of the homely to the decorative. The President spoke in reply to somebody's perfervid praise of the young painters, already beginning to be distinguished from the common painters of the day by the name of the Newlyn School—a name borrowed from the steep-streeted fishing-village, a mile beyond Penzance, which Mr. Stanhope Forbes, the virtual founder of the school, had lately chosen for his home and his painting-ground. That was fifteen years ago; and there he still lives and works, having a home of his own building which will be inherited by bearers of his name, and a studio which is open to students, and may, therefore—talent prospering in the land—secure the continuance of the School, in the larger sense of the word, which must ever be associated with his fame.

The Newlyn enthusiast of the Leighton talk had, like many of his countrymen, been refreshed, delighted, and exhilarated by the breath of out-of-doors blowing sweetly upon the dead stuffiness of Academy exhibitions from the Cornish coast. Real men and women peopled these Cornish canvases, putting to rout the mere costume pictures, the less than mummies, that neighboured them, but were not on terms with them.

"THE SEINE BOAT." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.



"THE WATERING-PLACE." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.
From the picture in the possession of the Corporation of Oldham.

These men were painters of light—"Light, that queen of colours," says St. Augustine. They knew the indoor light and the outdoor light, and they loved these two lights blended in what one must call nearly the only marriage ever made in the heavens. They were quickly discovered. Their names and their aims were canvassed. Their work was "in the air"—literally so, for they were *plein air* painters. Not even the objections raised by the most accomplished man of his generation could prove persuasive against convictions in their favour that stirred the onlooker and belonged to the heart as well as to the eye. True, the pictures on the easel, and one of two canvases of earlier date lingering upon the walls, proclaimed that the President, with all pains, practised what he preached; but they, too, were unconvincing. There stood Phryne, clothed, not with real sunshine, but with a light that never was on land or on sea or on the human figure. Imagination has its great empire; but assuredly its bounds are firmly set; it can give us no sunrises or sunsets, no floating clouds—nay, no candle-lights—to outvie in beauty the shining that is seen. "Eminent in amber," says the modern word-painter of

Damaris, who, smitten by the uprising sun while she worshipped her high idol, awaited Paul. "Eminent in amber"—contrast the phrase with that of any of the seventeenth-century poets who created what has been called a School of Light in English Poetry, and you illustrate at once the difference between Leighton's "Phryne" — itself "eminent in amber"—and the pearly tints of fish and sand and sky that did light and delight us all in "The Fish Sale" by which Stanhope Forbes first introduced himself to

"THE OLD BRIDGE." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.
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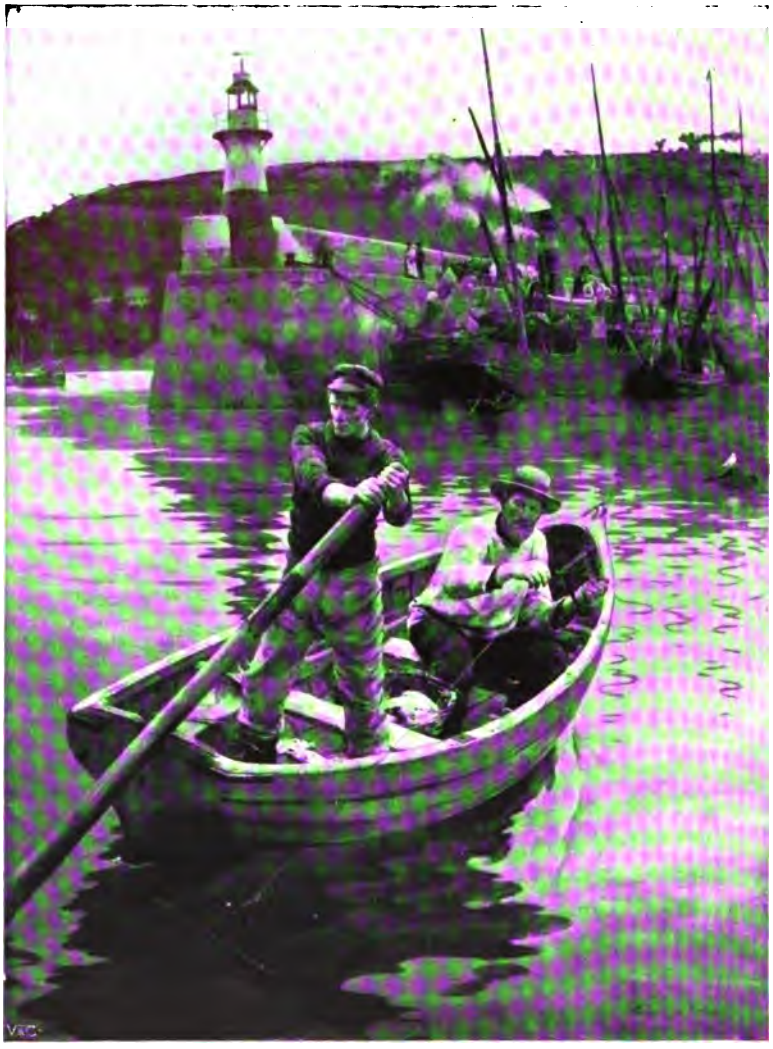
the public of Burlington House. There is no "platitude" in the infinitely various loveliness of lightings. Granted, alas! that a pauper-woman is a platitude; but the apron of a pauper-woman, with the firelight upon it, as once rendered by a Newlyner, Mr. Bramley, is transcendent in its beauty. It was no platitude to show that transfiguration. The painter there proved that the beggar-woman was clothed as beautifully as, say, Mr. Sargent's neighbouring Lady Faudel Phillips in a creation of Worth.

"I go to Cornwall myself to paint," conceded Leighton that day, bringing forth some oil-studies, the result of his last visitation of Cornish waters and Cornish clouds. Beautiful they were—truly the President's best; but they were Cyprus rather than Sennen Cove. In Mr. Stanhope Forbes's "Lighting-up Time," to take a case at random, the evening has the local colour; it is not dusk merely, it is the dusk of Cornwall—the county's very own; charged, therefore, with memories and meanings for all who ever "trod the skirts of the eventide" in those romantic parts. One such, seeing that picture amid the common ruck of Academy pictures, was instantly arrested; a Cornish holiday of his youth came back to him, with all his own broodings under that brooding sky.

"Thou hast sent forth Thy Light and Thy Truth." The words are sacred, but not too sacred for adoption as a motto by painters who cannot detach these phrases; who are painters of Truth because they are painters of Light; and perhaps the only moment when we can answer to our heart's content the question of which Pilate was the world's spokesman is when we face a veritable picture

"LIGHTING-UP TIME." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.



"THE LIGHTHOUSE." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.
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—this, indeed, is truth. If people should say—we hear them quite commonly so saying—that all this was seen and felt about Newlyn pictures in defiance of the "art for art's sake" formula, the answer is ready: that the critic of Newlyn has himself chosen that plain for the battle—"They paint platitudes." But there is no platitude in their paint. Let nobody suppose that the rendering of the thing seen does not presuppose high science in the painter. He who paints that which is of his own time and place, the people and the things about his own door, achieves success only by a *technique* that is in itself triumphant.

Not in the England of the 'seventies was Stanhope Forbes likely to learn a lesson he was later to teach to others. For that he must go to the land in which Millet had taught the primer of the loveliness of common things, and had immortalised the peasant all the more for his very transitoriness; the France in which Bastien Lepage was even then giving a perpetual sun-stain to the cheek of the wood-gatherer or the cowherd. Sargent, by that same token of light and truth, had just learned all that Carolus Duran could teach him, and a little more, when Stanhope Forbes entered the *atelier* of M. Bonnat. Without some such education as that which Paris then offered, a man could not take any part in the natural living development of art as it worked out its destiny in his own day. No one, remembering English art as it mostly was in the 'seventies, could have suspected Mr. Stanhope Forbes's pictures to have been painted apart from the inspiration of "over the water." Typical British painters had been painting piecemeal; he mastered the beauty of unity. They had aimed at painting elegant things, but had done so with a vulgar turn of the hand; he painted homely things with what was then an almost undreamed distinction. They knew two kinds of picture—that which they called dramatic and that which they called decorative; he knew but one, and that one was both: none the less a beautiful space of arranged line and colour because it was also a group of figures busy about an incident. His com-

"NOMADS." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.

position may tell a story, but it is a dignified mass, simple and grave, holding easily its own state within the limits of the frame.

Mr. Forbes is an Englishman who flies the British flag on all Imperialist occasions down in his Cornish home; but he marched to his artistic victories under French "colours." French artists have, for the most part, let pass the golden tones of Nature of which other schools had made an idol—Venetian and Fleming in the past. The great Englishmen of the eighteenth century had exaggerated the glow of colour until they had arrived at the tone of Titian's flesh, or the white of a ruffle painted by Van der Helst, or the amber-tinted pearliness of the "Circe" of Sir Joshua. Mr. Stanhope Forbes has followed the French in evading this convention and in seeking pleasure in daylight—the greys which are the habit of

"THE HAY CART." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.

From the picture in the possession of Mr. J. H. Balfour Browne, K.C.

"THE QUARRY TEAM." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.

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"THE RED ROOM, HOLLAND." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.
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the daily world. It is this very absence or gentleness of colour that allowed so many subtle effects of colour to the early Newlyn painters—Mr. Forbes, Mr. Bramley, Mr. Chevallier Tayler, Mr. Brangwyn, Mr. Langley, Mr. Norman Garstin, Mr. Gotch, Mr. Olsson, Mr. Grier, and the rest, with accessory Mr. Tuke at Falmouth. As at dawn the breeze "puffs out the stars," and the first glimmer of the sun obliterates all "meaner beauties of the night," so must the strong blues, for instance, of a pictured sky put out all tenderer lights. A grey or white sky can be shown on canvas—what it always is in a landscape—the brightest passage. But it is no uncommon experience to see a picture of southern sunshine in which the blue sky is the darkest tone of the composition. The offence is recognised by all eyes accustomed to value a sky as the very light-giver of a landscape. But the faulty painter is readily forgiven. He had two truths to present—colour and light; and they were truths all but irreconcilable except by the omnipotence of Nature—by the obliterations which light paradoxically effects where

> All things seem but one
> In the universal sun.

Little wonder was it, then, that during the 'eighties of the last century (how far off the sound, but how close the memory of it!) a new and moving spirit was generally felt to be stirring in the West. "Other painters," said a critic that year, "may be more conspicuous individually; but the Newlyners are the most significant body of painters now in England. They make the artistic year for us. This season they give the Academy its very life. And we shall give them," said this bold "liner"—who also, like Mr. Kipling's, was a "lady"—"precedence over the whole official body of Burlington House, over all the popular favourites and the owners of familiar names. Not more than half seriously they call themselves the Newlyn School, from the village where they have gathered for work from Nature and for mutual stimulus. Their aloofness from the world and their *camaraderie* have had the best results. They are engaged in a kind of community life of art, saved from the mannerism of the hermit as well as from the diffusions and dissipations of existence among outsiders."

That was written in 1888, the year made memorable by the exhibition of Newlyn pictures which included, besides Mr. Bramley's "Hopeless Dawn," the "Village Phil-

harmonic" of Mr. Stanhope Forbes. His little grey window diffuses daylight upon an evening interior lit by lamps, a meeting of lights, with resulting reflection on the metal instruments and all around, that is charged with a delicate beauty all its own. The figures of the musicians, uncouth in themselves, are redeemed from any approach to dowdiness by the power with which they are drawn.

A year later, Mr. Claude Phillips, another critic of discernment, was found declaring in an Academy notice: "The best piece of modern *genre* produced this year is Mr. Stanhope Forbes's 'By Order of the Court.'" The scene depicted was that of a sale by auction in a humble home; but the scene itself, though it mattered so much to the bankrupt family, matters little enough to us: only the treatment of the scene—the excellent characterisation of the faces, the struggle here between regret and greed, there between regret and curiosity; the glimpse of God's generous out-of-doors, contrasting with the glooms and shadows and squalors within, and the general accomplishment which evoked from the true critic already quoted the testimony: "Mr. Forbes is thus making good use of his solid foreign *technique*, using it as his weapon in the expression of English scenes and English types."

Living close to the ocean—an ocean calmed in a wide and beautiful bay—Mr. Stanhope Forbes has his motive of art and subject of painting always before him, in all changes of the weather, the season, and the hour. In his sea-pieces he has been mainly concerned with the lives and labours of the harbour. He is a painter of the coast rather than of the remoter sea, and the waves interest him chiefly for the sake of the fisherman who goes out upon them, who returns with them, or is cast up by them. And painting chiefly the water of the harbour, he paints calm water, in itself a separate and most beautiful and interesting study in colour, in surface, in depth, and in reflections. Calm water, the little pier, the lighthouse, the serried masts of fishing-boats in port, the green of the seaside hill—these are objects of increasing charm, as different as possible from the moving sea outside. Reflections alone are said to be matter for the study of a lifetime; and reflections

"HEALTH TO THE BRIDE!" BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.

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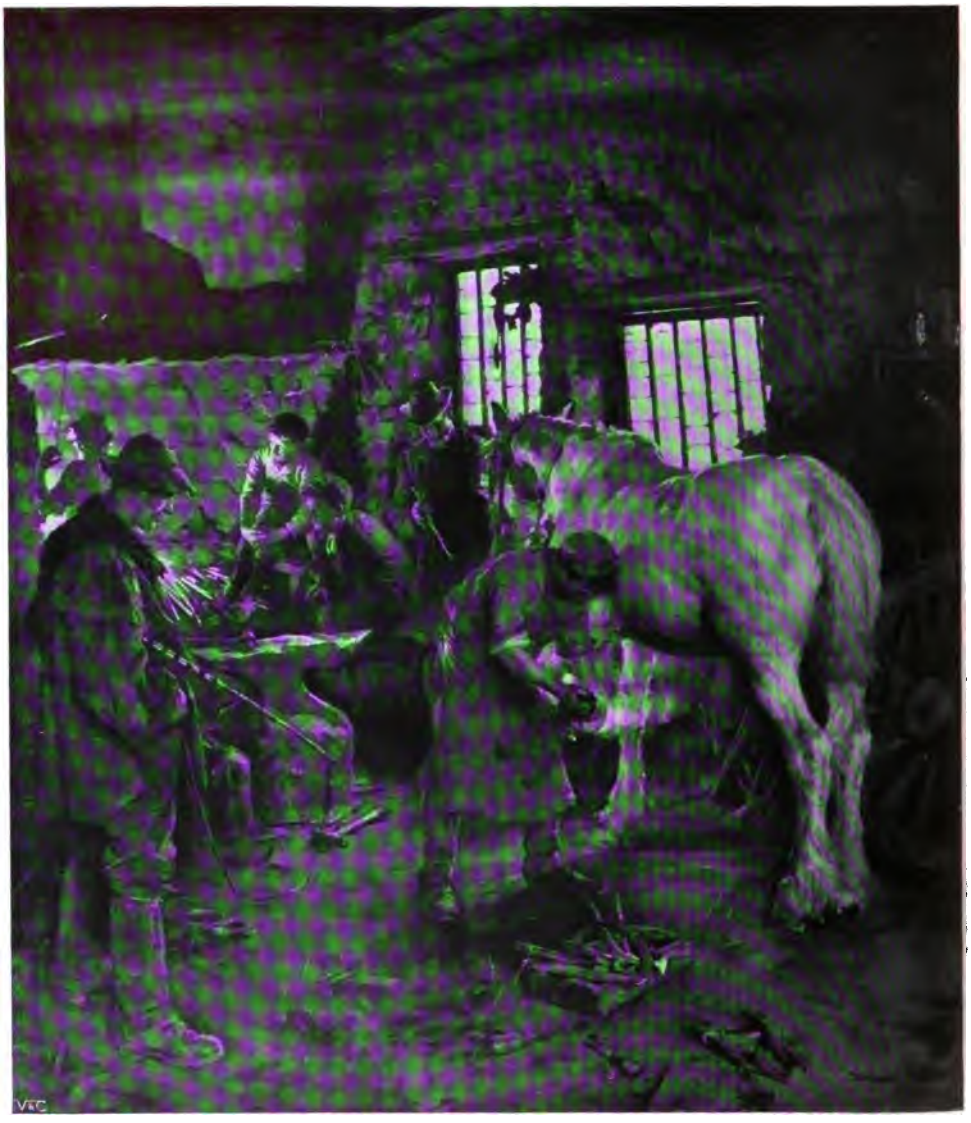

"THE SMITHY." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.

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love the harbour. Then there is the drawing of the small boat, also a harbour object, with its subtle curves, and the painting of the colour and light which the smooth water casts upon its under-side. But, being chiefly a figure painter, Mr. Forbes makes of these the accessories of the incidents of fishing life. He has no need to take the professional model; for his models have their own profession, and he watches them at work before they come to rehearse at the studio. Thus he has the real action, the movement of Nature. The steering-oar in "The Lighthouse" is held by the able hand; in "The Seine Boat" every attitude is that of the authentic fisherman resting upon his pile of nets. And in this picture the splendid heat and colour of the sun are painted at their work upon the fishermen's faces. It is so interesting to mark this common beauty of light, of colour, of form, and of action, that Mr. Forbes seldom chooses an exceptional event or unusual moment, as he has done in "A Rescue at Dawn," where the cool daybreak lights the group home from the wreck. In this department of his

art Mr. Forbes had a recognition which preceded the successes of "The Village Philharmonic," for it was in 1886, at the beginning of his career as an exhibitor, that his "Off to the Fishing Ground" was bought for the Walker Art Gallery at Liverpool, and in the year following that "Their Ever-Shifting Home" went to the Royal Academy, and has since gone to the National Gallery at Melbourne.

Nothing is so usual as the paradoxical; art when he paints abroad. "The Old Bridge"—painted in the South of France—is less convincing than, say, "The Hay Cart" of Cornwall; "The Red Room," a reminiscence of Holland, than "The Smithy," a picture in which we get the old beauty of blended natural and artificial light, with a transfigured horse in the midst, and that sense and stir of action which few English artists are able to present. "Forging the Anchor" is a picture of the same class, in

"THE VILLAGE PHILHARMONIC." BY STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.A.
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and one may say at once of Mr. Stanhope Forbes that he would not have been so thorough a painter of home life if he had been less of a cosmopolitan. He was born in Dublin (Mr. Hugh Lane should make a note of it); and between the date at which he left Dulwich College and that at which he went to Paris, he entered at our own Royal Academy Schools and also spent a short interval in Brussels. Four capitals, therefore, had their hand in the making of an artist whose specialty was to be the painting of typical English life—the life of the farmer and of the fisherman. Nor does he ever seem to be really at home with his which once more the beauty of labour is made manifest.

Life would be beautiful but for its ornament, even as it would be tolerable but for its pleasures; and perhaps the painter of English festivities and "Sunday best" has his hardest problem of beauty to solve. If the answer to the challenge "Is it accepted of song?" settles many questions of taste, so also "Can it be painted?" is a query which supplies an often useful standard. Labour at nearly every turn will stand that test; not so the holiday-making. But in "The Health of the Bride!" Mr. Forbes has faced Philistinism at its own

festival and has triumphed. The depressing decorations of the parlour, the more depressing costume of the toiler when he is at play, these yield to the multitude of lights, shadows, and reflections—the gayest guests that ever sat at wedding feast. The discarded plate, the used spoon—even these are glorified. Every glass on the table is a cage for captured sunshine, which yet owns no cage, but is free as the air in which it palpitates. The picture is not the best that he has painted; but it preaches perhaps more insistently than any other that forgotten article of every true observer's creed—the infinite beauty of common things—the "incomparable pomp" conferred by the momently changing heavens upon daily doings: "incomparable pomp" and nothing less, to use a phrase of Stevenson, that lover of light, whose northern pen did it the homage that was expressed contemporaneously by the canvases of Mr. Forbes at Newlyn.

Stevenson came of a family of lighthouse builders, and Mr. Forbes of a family of railway managers. Observation of lights was, therefore, among the chief cares and studies of former generations of the men of their race. Their colours and their intervals—upon the due arrangement and understanding of these, depended the lives of those who travelled by land or sea. One wonders if it was indeed thus that the novelist and the painter came by their mission. If so, the paradox peeps out once more; and we owe the paintings of Stanhope Forbes to the railways which were themselves not accepted of art or song, and which owed, and owe, a large measure of their prosperity to the painter's father, the late Mr. William Forbes; to his uncle, the late Mr. James Staats Forbes—who managed lines and collected pictures with an equal perspicacity; and to his brother, Mr. William Forbes.

To complete at once his cosmopolitanism, and yet to make him a home-stayer, Mr. Stanhope Forbes married Miss Elizabeth Armstrong, a lady who was born an artist in Canada.

ON THE MARSHES.

OUT on the marsh in the misty rain,
The air is full of the harsh refrain;
The long swamps echo the beat of wings;
The birds are back in the reeds again.

Down from the north they wing their way.
Out of the east they cross the bay.
From north and east they're steering home
To the inland ponds at the close of day.

Hid in the sea of reeds we lie,
And watch the wild geese driving by;
And listen to the plover's piping,—
The grey snipe's thin and lonely cry.

All day over the tangled mass,
The marsh-birds wheel and scream and pass.
The smoke hangs white in the broken rice.
The feathers drift in the water-grass.

LLOYD ROBERTS.

The Editor regrets that in the article on "The Work of Sir Edward J. Poynter, Bart., P.R.A.," which appeared in the December number of the WINDSOR MAGAZINE, *the permission for the reproduction of the picture "Helena and Hermia" was not ascribed to the real owners of the copyright. The original painting is in the Walker Art Gallery, at Liverpool, but the copyright of the picture belongs to Messrs. Virtue and Co., proprietors and publishers of the* ART JOURNAL.

THE AMAZING ELOPEMENT.

By HARRISON RHODES.*

JUNE sunlight and a small breeze from the west set the trees in the Park to sparkling. London's afternoon parade of fashion crowded the Drive with no less than its usual splendour. Yet Mr. Charles Edward Austin and his wife, rolling southward in a victoria of irreproachable appearance and unimpeachable comfort, seemed somehow plunged in gloom. It was not to be excused by the imminence of any unwelcome crisis in their lives, unless, indeed, dinner in Grosvenor Crescent with only Lady Angela's father and mother could be considered as such. It is true that there are people in the world who contribute more than the Earl and Countess of Emscott to the gaiety of nations, yet neither Charles Edward nor Lady Angela had any violent objections to the family *partie carrée;* and, after all, it was happening for only the second time that season. Indeed, the future might have been called bright with promise, for even then boxes and bags were being packed for a trip to Paris on the morrow. To understand the situation one ought rather to have searched the past.

So late as lunch the sky had seemed blue. Lady Angela had put on a costume of white linen which was proving very satisfactory, and the *menu* at the Savoy had included a variety of *truite saumonée* which made the meal most pleasant. Afterwards they had driven to Bond Street, where Lady Angela bought a hat or two, from motives of economy, so she explained, that she might not be tempted to spend too much in the Rue de la Paix. The mistake had probably been to make six calls upon relatives of the Emscotts, living in great, gloomy houses north of the Park, and to find four of them in. As the carriage passed the Stanhope Gate, Lady Angela turned to her husband and put a question in tones of grudging resignation.

"I suppose there's no doubt," she said, "that you and I are absolutely respectable, is there?"

"My only wish is," replied that young gentleman, "that my private life shall be thoroughly open to the light of day. If you, Angela, have any confession to make to me——"

"No." She seemed discouraged. "But this afternoon, when Aunt Julia was giving us her views on matrimony and its duties, it seemed almost more than I could bear that we should be happily and respectably married."

Charles Edward took his wife's hand in his for a moment—the Drive happened not to be very crowded just at this point—and repeated her words, though with an intonation which seemed to change their meaning.

"Yes," he said, "it seems to me sometimes more than I can bear—the happiness, perhaps, rather than the respectability."

For an instant Lady Angela's eyes shone upon Charles Edward not wholly unkindly.

"I know," she assented. "Still, when Aunt Julia went on as if marriage were——"

"A burden to be borne with thanksgiving," suggested her husband.

"Exactly. Every word she said seemed to make the institution duller and duller, until—yes, I will say it—I thought how nice it would be to be just as much in love with you as I am now, only not your wife."

"Aunt Julia is *your* aunt," was Charles Edward's comment. "You would have to go to see her just the same if we weren't married. Besides," he continued, apparently oppressed at last by the gloom which had fastened upon his wife, "I don't believe it would be any good our not being married. We'd just go and do it over again."

"But perhaps we might make it more exciting. I could get papa to forbid it, and we could elope."

"Well," said Charles Edward soothingly, "your mother thinks now we ought to stay on for your Aunt Maria's dance on the fourteenth, and we're going to Paris tomorrow. Let's pretend it's an elopement."

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Lady Angela's face lit for a moment; then it fell again.

"But you're my husband, and we're still all that Aunt Julia could wish."

Charles Edward nodded his head mournfully.

"Now, if you were only somebody else's husband——"

"Oh, I refuse," he protested.

"Or if I were somebody else's wife——"

"My dear," began Charles Edward, "if you abandon your mind to such thoughts——"

"But I shouldn't love anybody but you. To-night I should dine with my husband for the last time. To-morrow he would find a note of farewell on his dressing-table, and I should have bolted with you to Paris. It *is* Paris one goes to, isn't it?"

"I believe Paris is common in such cases," replied Charles Edward with some reserve.

"Then we'll begin pretending now," said Lady Angela triumphantly. "I will abandon everything and fly with you to-morrow."

"Yes," said her companion, still with moderate enthusiasm only. "But then I have to get out of the carriage now. I don't think we can be seen together in the Park."

"Of course not. We must have a clandestine meeting. That will be perfectly enchanting!" cried Lady Angela ecstatically. "We have just time for it before we go home to dress. Where do you meet ladies clandestinely when you're going to bolt with them, Charles Edward?"

"However should I know?" began the prospective rake mock-seriously. "My past life——"

"Oh, my dear——" protested Lady Angela.

Charles Edward meditated a moment, and evidently decided that it was not a bad game that had been invented.

"Well," he said slowly. "I remember once about this time of year I happened to be bolting with a Duchess—or was it the Marchesa that year? No, it was the Duchess—and we made the final arrangements in Mrs. Ellyson's tea-rooms in Bond Street. The tea itself is shocking, but there are some discreet alcoves and almost no illumination."

Lady Angela stopped the carriage, and her companion descended. Graciously she gave him her hand.

"Good-bye, Mr. Austin. So glad to have been able to give you this lift." Then swiftly and in low and mysterious tones: "In a quarter of an hour, at the old place!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Ellyson has never found it necessary conspicuously to advertise the entrance to her tea-rooms. The exquisite women and the perfectly appointed young men who turn into that quiet doorway off Bond Street might indeed be going to the estate agent's on the first floor, to the milliner's on the second, or even, unpleasant though the thought may be, to the dentist's on the third; however, most of them take the passage on the ground floor and enter with little delay the subdued oriental splendour of her establishment. It would be a pleasure to linger over a description of Mrs. Ellyson's decorations, in which the arts of the East are seen flowering again in England and transmuted by the touch of the Tottenham Court Road. But one must be content to give no more than a general impression of a lovely labyrinth of cosy corners, upon which the daylight from small windows falls so restrained and filtered by innumerable folds of silks and rich laces, that in the more remote distances the proprietress keeps lit always a few tiny electric globes, glowing red in the jaws of bronze crocodiles, or in the hands of statuettes of the *art nouveau*. Tea, as one might have guessed, is served on Moorish *tabourets*. Gracefully in the gloom move the white-aproned waitresses, destined many of them to become peeresses of the realm, rivals hated even by the Gaiety girls.

Into this characteristically English scene came Lady Angela at the end of the appointed quarter of an hour. She descended from a hansom secured at Prince's Gate. Her face was obscured by a veil purchased *en route* in Knightsbridge. Charles Edward, springing forward, received a swift, warm pressure of the hand and a murmured and romantic greeting. They secured a table and requested tea. Then Lady Angela put back her veil and looked about, preparing to catch from the atmosphere the antidote to the moral maxims of Aunt Julia. It was true that in certain corners one seemed to perceive great fluffiness of feminine attire and to catch sight of young men bending with unnecessary tenderness over the tea-cups. But more in the open were unmistakable family parties (even one child in a sailor suit) and the *jeunesse dorée* of London obviously doing with chastened enthusiasm the honours of the Metropolis to their country cousins.

"'I suppose there's no doubt that you and I are absolutely respectable?'"

When Lady Angela turned to the young man at her side, there was a note of severity in her voice.

"You can scarcely pretend, Charles Edward," she said coldly, "that all these ladies are going to bolt to-morrow. I don't believe we shall see one of them on the boat at Dover."

"Don't take a dark view, my dear. Lots of people go to Ostend instead of Paris, I dare say. But I'm sure somebody in some of these corners will go our way. Now, there's a woman," he continued, with the slightest gesture towards the entrance, "who's looking for somebody—and for trouble, too, I should say."

The lady he indicated was indeed searching the rooms with a gaze of singular intensity. Failure she accepted with a shrug of the shoulders which seemed to indicate not so much resignation and calm as a tumult within. She was a tall creature, of a commanding presence, which undoubtedly led her female friends to call her "big" when they ought rather to have said "fine." She was dark, and a black hat and gown accentuated the richness of her colouring, which had that glowing brilliancy of the South that one occasionally sees in Englishwomen. She was, in short, a person of no inconsiderable claims to beauty; to Charles Edwards' facile imagination she appeared the obvious heroine of some tale of quick emotion and reckless act. But Lady Angela,

embittered by memories of Aunt Julia and by the presence before her very eyes of a nice English child spreading jam upon his bread-and-butter, was obsessed by the respectability of life, and refused to follow her husband along the path his fancy opened.

"No," she said sternly. "I decline to be your dupe. This woman is waiting to give tea to three school-children, at least. She lives only for her husband and for respectability. The thought of running away would kill her. The mere mention of a horrid foreign town like Paris would make her faint. And if she sits at this table next to us," continued Lady Angela with determination, as the woman in black came towards them across the room, "she shall faint."

The stranger seated herself, and Lady Angela began at once, her voice vibrating with deep emotion.

"In Paris," she said, exactly loud enough to be heard at the next table and at no other, "in Paris I can forget——"

"Aunt Julia," suggested Charles Edward almost inaudibly.

"That brute," said Lady Angela aloud, and then relieved the sentiment of ambiguity by adding, "my husband."

The stranger in black did not faint, but no effort of good breeding could conceal the fact that she had overheard her neighbour's impassioned phrase. Both the Austins felt assured that nothing of their conversation would now escape her. Thus encouraged by an attentive audience, they proceeded cheerfully to tear to tatters the character of an imaginary husband. There was only one moment when a listener might have been confused. Lady Angela spoke of the brute as Eugene. Charles Edward lowered his voice at once.

"Why Eugene?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know!" was the murmured reply. "Of course, Eugene Hamilton *did* want to marry me."

"We'll call him John," said Charles Edward with decision, and John the worthless scamp became when they spoke loud

"She was a tall creature, of a commanding presence."

again. Anyone might have supposed him to be accurately "John Eugene."

As has been suggested, there was little to be said for John. Yet Lady Angela, with instinctive delicacy before a total stranger, forbore to put upon the shoulders of the imaginary scoundrel many of the grosser crimes commonly attributed to husbands. Indeed, were it not for that priceless American phrase, "incompatibility of temper," it would be hard to name in a few words Lady Angela's grievance. But John's stolidity, his lack of enthusiasms, his total failure to sympathise with his wife's love of change, of adventure, of romance, seemed, as set forth in lively terms, quite enough to hold the attention of their auditor. The stranger lady consumed her tea and listened eagerly. Yet somehow she did not seem so shocked as Lady Angela could have wished. The disappointed wife, therefore, proceeded at once to the matter of the elopement, and of that tender sympathy offered by the young man at her side, which was now all that made life bearable. Watching out of the tail of her eye, Lady Angela was pleased to note that as Charles Edward, in fervent phrases, offered her happiness and guilty splendour abroad, discussed the horrid details of the trip to Paris, decided upon the train, and fixed the fatal hour for the meeting at Charing Cross the next morning, he manifestly made the woman in black "sit up" at last. Evidences of agitation, nervous rearrangements of hat and boa were not lacking. Then suddenly the lady rose, and casting one final glance of curious intensity and intimacy upon the guilty pair, swept swiftly to the door. A man stood there. Grasping his hand with an air of relieved suspense, she turned quickly and went out into the street.

"That," explained Lady Angela, "was her husband. Outside in a four-wheeler there are three small children. They are probably staying in town for a few days with their Aunt Julia. To-night, at dinner, our friend will open the eyes of that respectable woman and tell her what London is really like. Now shall we go?"

Charles Edward consulted his watch.

"We've an extra ten minutes," he said; "let's stay. I can have another cigarette; and you might tell me, without witnesses this time, that you love me very much."

The reader must forgive them; but they had only been married five years at this period, and they themselves sometimes feared that when time should have passed—say twenty-five or fifty years—the honeymoon feeling would be almost gone.

II.

THE start from Charing Cross was neither eventful nor exciting. Charles Edward made personal observations of the weather as they drove from Grosvenor Crescent, and read the meteorological report in two papers. The result was a telegram to Dover to engage a private deck-cabin on the boat. The Channel is tricky, and it is as well to be on the safe side—if, indeed, that can be taken to mean anything except the actual solid ground of France or England. Lady Angela, who had been left established comfortably in the corner of the carriage, looked over the *Morning Post*, and at intervals glanced at the various travellers hurrying on to their places in the train. (One is apt to meet people one knows on almost any route to Paris). Once, looking up, she thought she saw a vaguely familiar figure go down the platform, but the impression was so fleeting that she announced to her husband upon his return from the telegraph-office that no one they knew had been sighted.

If the statement had been really true, this story would never have been written, and the lives of at least two people would perhaps have been wrecked for ever. But neither Charles Edward nor Lady Angela felt anything unusual in the air. Peacefully and cheerfully they sped towards Dover. Yesterday was forgotten—it was a way they had of serving yesterdays — and it occurred to neither of them that they might be regarded by any human creature as a guilty and fleeing pair. Yet if there was any single lesson which life by this time should have taught them, it was that the idlest word is not too idle to reach far, and that the most fantastic whim is not too fantastic — especially if it happen to be Charles Edward's or Lady Angela's—seriously to affect the course of the great world in its orbit.

At Dover the sky was clear, and the white cliffs of France invited one across a dancing sea of blue. The air was crisp and clean after London. The crossing to Calais seemed even likely to prove a pleasure. But Lady Angela, profoundly distrustful of the Channel, decided to discover at once whether her cabin were really comfortable, to unpack a few things, and thus to make sure of a safe retreat if wind and wave betrayed her. She followed two porters and an obsequious steward to the stateroom door. The porters deposited the luggage, and the obsequious

steward bowed before Charles Edward in anticipation of a tip, while Lady Angela turned for a moment to watch her fellow-passengers streaming down the gang-plank. Suddenly she started and gripped her husband by the arm. What she saw filled her, though she could not have explained why, less with the excitement of adventure than with some sense of trouble looming near. Half way down the descent stood the lady of the Bond Street tea-rooms, giving the other woman, as their eyes met, a curious long look of intimacy and understanding. Obeying an instinctive impulse, Lady Angela quickly drew Charles Edward inside and slammed the door. She sat down upon the sofa, at once astonished and annoyed to find herself trembling.

"What does that woman mean by following us?" she demanded of her husband, and condescended ultimately to explain of whom she spoke.

Charles Edward at first, in his excitement, could offer no acceptable explanation. Mere curiosity seemed scarcely to account for a journey to France. Finally he thought of blackmail, and his spirits rose.

"What fun!" he cried.

But his wife still sat on the red velvet, not seeming to appreciate to the full the manifest delightfulness of their position. Charles Edward regarded her with serious concern for a moment, then he spoke again.

"Of course," he said, "*I* enjoy the situation because it is such a novelty to me. *I've* never been blackmailed before. I can understand that naturally to you, Angela, my love——"

The subject would have lent itself, on Charles Edward's lips, to extravagant treatment at some length. But at that moment the door leading upon the deck was burst open with extraordinary violence, and into the room fairly plunged the lady in black. She was evidently a prey to very unusual agitation, and she turned upon the two astonished people in the stateroom a wild and desperate look. Flinging the door to, she leaned back against it for one little, exhausted, gasping moment. Then she spoke.

"I couldn't help it. You must let me stay here. I'll explain in a moment, and you'll understand. But you must hide me from him here."

Charles Edward started towards the door. If any dangerous gentleman lurked outside, it was a thing to be known and attended to at once; but the lady put out an arm and stopped him.

"Don't go. I don't think he knows I came in here. Don't go out," she urged breathlessly. "It isn't safe. I don't know what he would do." She sank upon the sofa, her eyes clouded and tragic, and her hands clasped across her knees. I can't think how he knew," she continued. "I never thought that he would follow me."

"Who?" asked Lady Angela, since it seemed absurd to wait longer without knowing.

"My husband," replied the stranger quite simply. "You see, I'm leaving him—bolting, to be quite frank—like you," she added, smiling wanly at Lady Angela and her companion. "Do you remember me? I sat near you at Mrs. Ellyson's yesterday, and I listened. Oh, I don't apologise for that!—I couldn't have helped it—you seemed to be discussing my own problems and settling them for me. Don't think I'm talking wildly, but I got a feeling that you had taken the decision out of my hands. I had come there uncertain. Heaven knows what I thought I was going to do with my life! And even before Freddie came, I'd decided, just as you had, to chuck everything and go to him."

"Then I'm responsible for what you've done," said Lady Angela slowly. She had risen to her feet and stood leaning against the panelled wall, looking a little pale.

"I was almost superstitious about it. I wanted to come by the same train, just as you were coming. Freddie thought it wasn't wise. He went by the night mail. He is to meet me at the Gare du Nord."

"Now, what do you want to do?" asked Charles Edward gravely.

"I can't have him meet Horace!" cried the stranger with sudden energy. "I don't know why I went panicky when I saw Horace. I may as well face it out first as last. Perhaps its honester. I'll go out to him. I suppose he can't make a very dreadful scene on the deck with all those people." She had her hand on the knob of the cabin door.

"Don't!" cried Lady Angela. "Don't go to him just now. I must—we must think."

"How did your husband know?" put in Charles Edward.

"Some servant must have told him that yesterday I sent trunks to Paris. Not that I should have expected," she went on bitterly, "that he would have troubled to follow. I shouldn't have thought he cared enough to do that."

"'Then I'm responsible for what you've done,' said Lady Angela."

"Perhaps," said Lady Angela gently, "he cares more than you think."

"I shouldn't want to believe that," said the stranger, and her voice sounded harsh. "I won't believe it now; I won't!" Then, quite unexpectedly, putting her arm up to hide her face, and leaning her head against the cabin wall, she began to cry softly.

For a moment there was silence in the little room. Finally Lady Angela looked at her husband.

"Charles Edward," she said, "it is just about here that one gets that lovely view of Dover Castle as the boat leaves the harbour. You know you never want to miss it."

In all honesty one must confess that Charles Edward would have been willing to miss it, just this once. But it is one of the rules of the Austins' life, that whenever either one chooses to assume command, the other unhesitatingly takes orders. Besides, he knew that there are moments of sorrow

and crises in a woman's life when only another woman's sympathy can bring consolation or invite confidence. He caught up a cap and slid quietly out upon the deck, giving the girl, who stood with one hand on the sobbing woman's shoulder, a smile of encouragement and perfect trust.

It ill befits any male creature to understand or to pretend that he understands the processes by which a woman of the right sort may make another woman know at once that it is wise and safe to take counsel with her as to the guidance of one's life. It is sufficient to know that soon the woman in black was pouring forth her story to a newfound friend. Lady Angela sat, still a little pale, with a curious smile flickering occasionally on her lips as phrases she herself had invented in jest about the unhappy John Eugene now did service when real emotions were stirring and the happiness of two human beings was at stake.

At the very beginning the unknown lady insisted on telling who she was. If her husband's name might be set down here, it would offer to those familiar with the politics of England some explanation of a phrase used earlier in this tale, when it was said that the most fantastic whim might affect the course of the great world in its orbit. The task of doing his part in making England safe and happy had prevented Horace—that name will do as well as another—from keeping his fireside as he kept his country.

His wife's complaints were not of actual unkindnesses, of cruelties, or of infidelities. They had to do rather with seeming indifference, with remoteness from all the little concerns of the home, with inability to meet his wife half-way in any longings for excitement, adventure, and romance. Lady Angela sketching John Eugene as the reverse of the medal of Charles Edward had, curiously enough, come near to something like the real portrait of Horace. Yet John Eugene had lacked much of real gentleness and solid worth which Lady Angela felt Horace to possess. And she could not believe that Freddie, waiting at the Gare du Nord, was even to be thought of in comparison with Charles Edward. Indeed, the stranger scarcely pretended that an overpowering passion had dragged her from her home. She loved him—yes. He loved her—yes. But her husband's aloofness was the great cause of the present desperate venture.

"I don't understand his coming after me," she said again. "I remember so well his saying once that a wife who would run away wasn't worth fetching back."

"Men change their minds sometimes, too," said Lady Angela softly. Then with a sudden energy of conviction: "He really loves you. I know it. And you, in spite of all, you care for him."

"I did once, when we were first married. But, oh, that seems so long ago!"

"Try to remember it."

The stranger looked curiously at Lady Angela.

"Oh, I don't want to talk platitudes," continued the latter, "but marriage *is* better than the other thing. We women all know it. It's so much to have the right to be happy, not to need to take it. And the world, yours and mine, is too good to give up. You know that."

"But you——" began the lady in black.

"Oh, are you to be guided by my example?" exclaimed Lady Angela.

"Yes, I am," was the sharp reply, "and I don't think what you are doing now is quite playing the game. I'm not likely to be much impressed by moral maxims in your mouth. Oh, pardon me," and she put her hand on Lady Angela's arm, "I don't mean to be rude. But you can't shirk the responsibility. You may not have meant to do it, but you helped me to decide to go to Freddie. Don't desert me now. All I'm asking is to be as happy as you are with the man you've gone to. Oh, you two made me feel the joy that you have in life together! You made me remember all I had dreamed of when I married Horace; you made me greedy again for love!"

Lady Angela knelt on the floor by the other's side. There were tears in her eyes as she played her trump card.

"Well, then, you shall be guided by my example," she said, "though perhaps it hasn't been quite fair to you. No one could have expected you to understand an idle, foolish joke. We *are* happy—happier than you can think, but it's just because Charles Edward is my husband."

To the bewildered woman she explained that they had only pretended to run away.

"Let's pretend that you were only pretending, too," she urged.

The real runaway sat in a state of collapse. Somehow, when the mere mechanical support of Lady Angela's example was gone, her heart seemed to weaken within her. Or was it gaining courage?

"What will Horace say?" she faltered.

"He'll say very little," cried Lady Angela

"The appearance before him of a young woman, singularly attractive to look upon."

almost gaily. "I'll promise to do all the talking. Give him a chance again, won't you, dear? I feel somehow that Horace will understand you better after this. If he fails you again, you shall run away with anyone you like—that is, except Charles Edward."

Before the matter was settled, there were, perhaps, more words than were absolutely necessary, and perhaps more tears. But sometimes this is the way with women. Ultimately they took some observations through a port-hole. Charles Edward was seen obediently, if disconsolately, viewing Dover Castle, and Horace pacing the deck with a stern, troubled, and bewildered face. The former, turning a restless head occasionally towards the cabin door, saw it

fly open, and received a signal to approach. The latter, striding as he thought through a world of strangers, was astonished at the appearance before him of a young woman whom even he, fairly oblivious of such matters, observed to be singularly attractive to look upon.

"Won't you come into the cabin?" she said. "Your wife and I are going to order some sandwiches, because we shan't get lunch till late at Calais. We thought that you might be hungry and that we wouldn't keep up the joke any longer."

Turning in the direction indicated by the utterer of this cryptic speech, the astonished gentleman saw his wife at the stateroom door. A close observer might have said that her eyes were a little red, but she was smiling faintly now. He stepped swiftly towards her and caught both her hands in his.

"Sybil——" he began in a voice roughened with feeling. But he went no further. It will be remembered that Lady Angela had promised that he should say very little.

"Sybil," she interrupted, "how absurd it is that I should actually have to be introduced to your husband." Then without waiting for Sybil, who had appeared almost confused, she went on: "I'm Lady Angela Austin; and if you didn't bury yourself in that stuffy House, and go to so many committee meetings, and leave dear Sybil to amuse herself by herself, you would know me and my husband. And we're really worth knowing," she added as she paused for breath.

"You are indeed, dear Angela," said Sybil softly.

"You probably know my father, Lord Emscott. Papa goes to quantities of dull things, just as you do. Mamma would be quite justified in leaving him. You must be thankful that I've never advised Sybil to leave you," said Lady Angela, with an air of hearty frankness.

"But——" began Sybil's confused husband. It was as long a speech as he was allowed to make for some time.

"On the other hand, I did advise her to do this—just to test you, just to prove what I'm always telling her, how much you really love her. There was also a bet on it—I'm afraid you'll have to pay for dinner to-night. You are, or were, under the impression that she was to meet Freddie in Paris. Well, that's what we arranged you should hear. We did need a fourth for dinner to-night, but I always said it would be you. As to Freddie"— (Lady Angela had been forced into a position of some intimacy with the gentleman at the Gare du Nord by the fact that she was ignorant of his surname; so she took a step further)—"as to Freddie," she continued, "he is, as a matter of fact, rather devoted to me."

The statement, even to the unimpressionable Horace, did not sound improbable.

"Now that you're here and have been forced to give up a quantity of stupid meetings and things, I think we will stop at Boulogne, and not go to Paris till to-morrow. I want to play *petits chevaux* at the Casino to-night, and I want you to console me for the loss of Freddie."

Then her voice suddenly came down from its pitch of gaiety, and she went on with a little tremble of feeling in it, while Horace's hand gently took Sybil's in his.

"I want you to make love to Sybil, too. Oh, it can all be talked about before us four; we all understand. You silly people were drifting apart. Now perhaps this little joke, this little misunderstanding about running away, will make you both see right. At any rate, for at least three days you shall have the best object lesson in the world before your eyes. I know that for each of you there's only one Horace and one Sybil. Don't hide it, least of all from yourselves. I won't even try to conceal the fact that there's only one Charles Edward in the world."

"It is perhaps more evident to-day," said that young gentleman, smiling affectionately at the young woman he had married, "that there is but one Angela."

"She went wandering along the shores of a lake in the moonlight."

A Bear and Her Cubs.

By WILLIAM DAVENPORT HULBERT.*

THE bear was only four years old when her first cubs came, yet in every respect but one she proved a model mother. She was affectionate and devoted, took good care of her children, fed them well, watched their play and their frolics, their childish squabbles, and all the various phases of their growth and development with keen maternal interest, and even punished them when it was necessary—and sometimes, perhaps, when it wasn't. But—well—you shall hear. When the crucial moment came, she failed. Please remember, when you come to judge her, that she was young, and that a man seemed to her a very terrible creature—as, indeed, he is to most black bears.

One afternoon, when the cubs were still quite small, she left them in the sunshine on a little knoll while she went to catch some frogs in a swale only a few rods away, and during her absence a land-looker came along. Now, this land-looker had heard a good many stories of the ferocity of a she-bear when she thinks that her cubs are in danger, and he had also heard it said that this ferocity is all bluff, and that a black bear will never really attack a man under any circumstances. Being of a somewhat investigative turn of mind, and being also well armed with a revolver and a knife, and having a helper with him who was a handy man with an axe, he decided to make a test case. So he began teasing those cubs, and he pinched them and slapped them and cuffed them till they yelled lustily for their mother to come to the rescue. She heard, and, not having the least idea what was going on, she came charging up through the bushes like a locomotive on the warpath. But suddenly she stopped short. Through the intervening branches she had caught a glimpse of the two armed men, each of them holding one of her babies and tormenting it, and both intently watching the moving bushes that heralded her coming. Though she was not familiar with land-lookers, and knew nothing at all about their weapons, she realised that here was something very formidable, and she backed off a little way to think about it. Again the cubs cried out for help, and again she charged to within twenty feet of the men, but she hadn't quite nerve enough to leave her cover, and she checked herself at the very last moment, when another jump would have meant a fight, and, in all probability, the end of her life. For the next five minutes she went tearing about in an agony of rage and suspense and indecision, growling and roaring and carrying on as if she were crazy, but never once showing herself, while all the time her children kept up their squealing and calling. Then two shots rang out, each followed by a scream and a long, sobbing, babylike cry. The men departed hastily, and she ran to the cubs and found them dying.

Whether, mingled with her grief, there was any sense of shame over her failure to fight for her babies, or whether she had any real reason to feel such shame, is a question which I would rather not try to answer.

In any event, this proved to be only the beginning of her troubles. The next spring a set of triplets was killed by a fisher-cat, who entered her den while she was out

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looking for food, and another year it was a fox who was to blame. Time after time her children were murdered or taken away from her by one enemy or another. Never before did a bear mother have such continual bad luck, and never was it more undeserved. It was men who did most of the mischief, I regret to say, and they seemed to have an idea that in killing a cub or carrying it into captivity they were ridding the woods of a ferocious monster whom it was their bounden duty to dispose of; whereas the truth was that, if those bear babies had been allowed to grow up, no matter how big and strong they might have become, or how capable of inflicting great harm upon their enemies, they would, in all probability, have lived quiet, peaceable, inoffensive lives, and would never have harmed a human being unless greatly wronged or obliged to fight for life itself.

So, as the years went by, she had many cubs, but did not raise one, and she made a lonely figure as she went tramping restlessly through the woods by day or wandering along the shores of a lake in the moonlight. She was changing a little as she grew older. She was bigger and stronger, her black hair was thicker and longer and silkier, and in the autumns, when she had put on her winter coat, and had fed on beechnuts till she was fat and sleek, she was a beautiful animal. Perhaps she was also more courageous. Certainly she was on better terms with life and knew better how to meet its emergencies. She had had a number of pretty violent scraps with other animals, at one time and another, and once she had even tackled a bull-moose and killed him. Yet she was not naturally of a very scrappy disposition. In her face, with its dark eyes, its rounded ears, and its slight and delicate arch from nose to forehead, there was rather an expression of intelligence and of good intention, one might almost say of kindness, not unlike that of a noble-natured dog, with at times a suggestion of a strong sense of humour. She was not quarrelsome. But an occasional fight with a neighbour was almost of necessity a part of her life in the forest, and she took what came to her and never failed to bear off the honours. Once she had a tussle with a steel trap, and only escaped from it by gnawing off a portion of her left forepaw. That also took nerve—more nerve than the fighting. It was an exciting adventure, and very painful; but we must pass over it lightly, for it had little to do with her as a mother of cubs, though, like the other things, it undoubtedly affected her character more or less.

In the main her pursuits were peaceful. To a great extent she was a vegetarian. She was fond of berries of all sorts—bear-berries—named in honour of herself—blue-berries, wintergreen berries, white snowberries, blackberries, raspberries, and I know not how many other kinds; and her long, red tongue learned to gather them from their stems as skilfully as any fingers could. She had an especial weakness for wild, black cherries; and when they were ripe, there was nothing else she liked better than to find a small tree loaded with them, gather the branches together in her arms so that she could reach them handily, and feast to her heart's content. She never tired of them, and in the season she could spend hours at a time in the enjoyment of their acid flavour. In the autumn the beechnuts were her staple food, and there were certain roots of which she was quite fond, which she had no difficulty in digging up with her claws.

As to man, her attitude towards him was well illustrated by a little incident that occurred one summer afternoon. While crossing an open marsh, she met a turtle, and taking it between her paws, she rose upon her hind-legs and stood there almost as straight as a pine, turning the queer, round, flat thing over and over, and examining it from every point of view, preparatory to scooping the meat out of the shell and eating it. From between the trees that bordered the leeward side of the marsh, a surveyor was watching her curiously, and after a moment he turned and signalled to one of his assistants, a green Irishman, who had never seen a bear and knew little about the woods, to come forward quickly and quietly. The Irishman came, treading noiselessly on deep, soft moss of the cedar swamp; but when he caught sight of the big brute standing there like a man, he was so frightened that he forgot to be cautious.

"Howly Mother Mary!" he cried, "have I come up here in the bush to be et up alive by a baste like that?"

He need not have been alarmed. At the first sound of his voice the bear dropped the turtle and melted away into the distant landscape, going as if she had been shot out of a gun. "Live and let live," was her motto when it came to human beings, and for many years those two men were the only ones that had laid eyes upon her. She was

"'Have I come up here in the bush to be et up alive by a baste like that?'"

possessed of a keen nose, a good eye, a swift foot, and much cunning; and, though she saw a good many hunters, trappers, land-lookers, and lumbermen—or, if she did not see them, knew that they were there—none of them saw her. Nevertheless, I think that she was really gaining a little in nerve, and on one occasion she certainly made a very great effort to get at a man, or, at least, to get near him.

That experience, which came on a day in spring while she was still shut up in her winter den, was one of the hardest of her life. During the long weeks and months that she had lain there, the moisture of her breath and of the melting and freezing snow had formed a heavy mass of ice around her doorway, and little by little the opening had grown smaller, until she could no longer pass out, but had become a prisoner in her own home. It was still large enough, however, for the two cubs who had been born when the winter was about half gone, and once in a while they used to go outside to play in the snow. One day, while she was thus left alone in the den, there stole in through the open door an odour intensely disagreeable to all bears—the odour which means that a man is near. In great excitement she threw herself with all her strength against the front of the den, trying to lift the ice and force a way out; but she might as well have butted into a mountain. It was immovable, and in a moment more she heard the cubs cry out in pain and fright, just as those other cubs had done years

before. Again she threw herself against her prison walls, roaring at the top of her voice; but they held firm, and almost before she knew what had happened, the voices of the cubs had died away in the distance, and it was all over. No matter whether her courage was real, or whether she would have done nothing more than "put up a bluff," it had profited her nothing, and the after days of her captivity, before the spring sun and rain melted the ice and set her free, were very, very lonely ones.

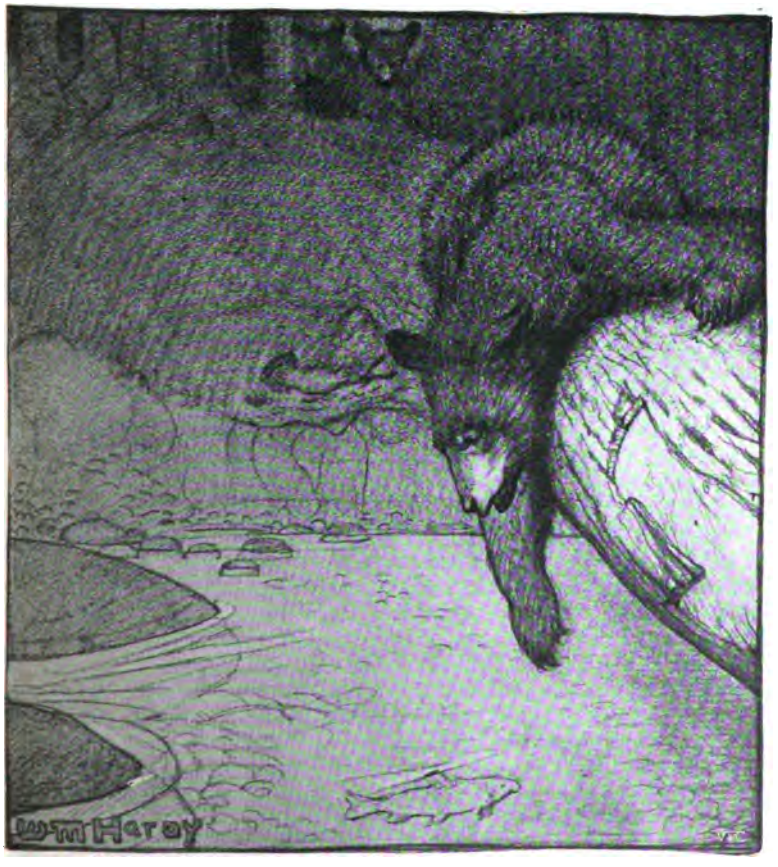
On another occasion she had a somewhat similar experience with a river-driver who happened to come upon that year's pair of twins at a moment when she had gone down to the river to get a drink, leaving them scuffling and playing at the top of the bank. He looked around hastily for the old bear, saw nothing of her, and, picking up a cub under each arm, started off with them. Once more she heard her babies yelling for help, and once more she sprang to the rescue. The man heard her coming and ran at the top of his speed, and she followed at the top of hers. But if she really meant to tackle him, she had no chance to prove it, for she didn't catch him. If he had stayed on land, she could have overhauled him in two minutes or less; but, unfortunately, the drive was going down stream, and the surface of the river was crowded with pulpwood sticks and with pine and hemlock logs. The man knew where his salvation lay, and when he heard her uncomfortably close, he turned and scrambled down the bank to the water's edge. Running on floating timber was part of his profession, a thing at which he was exceedingly expert, and he darted out upon the river and went jumping from stick to log and from log to stick as nimbly as a squirrel, still holding a yelling cub fast under each arm. The bear tried to follow him, but she wasn't cut out for a river-driver. Few of the logs were large enough to carry her four hundred pounds, and she was not lively enough to leap from one to another before either had time to sink beneath her, as the man did when he found himself on the smallest ones and knew that he must be quick or they would let him down. Before she was a rod from the bank she went head first into the river. She was a powerful swimmer when she was given half a chance, but she couldn't do much with the logs and the pulpwood crowding around her; and though she struggled valiantly, striking out with all her giant strength, and thrusting the logs aside as if they had been playthings, it was of no use. The river-driver was soon out of sight around a bend of the stream, and, as once before, she heard her children's cries grow fainter and fainter, till they were lost in the distance.

The next autumn there were no beechnuts, or practically none, the season was very cold and stormy, and the winter set in early and threatened to be long and severe. The black bear was growing old. The tan-coloured spots on her nose and muzzle and over her eyes, which alone broke the jet black of her beautiful fur, were becoming a trifle greyish. She was not quite so swift of foot as she had once been, and life had not quite the same zest. That autumn, too, the woods were very dreary. The sky was grey and cold, and the dead leaves underfoot were sodden with the rain and soon were hidden under a layer of icy snow. For a while she tramped restlessly about, ploughing through the deepening drifts and looking everywhere for food; but there was little pleasure in such wanderings, and less profit. Provisions of all kinds were very scarce, and the wisest thing to do was to "den up" before she lost any more of the store of fat which she would need to sustain her through the long winter. So, earlier than usual, she sought out a favourable spot, a small, sandy ridge that lifted itself a few feet above the level of a dense cedar swamp, where men seldom came. A big pine that had stood there for a hundred and fifty years had fallen at last, uprooted in one of the autumn gales, and under its prostrate trunk she scooped out a hole in the loose soil, piling up the earth and the snow around it for a further shelter, and making it all snug and cosy. Under another part of the fallen trunk she found some dry leaves, which she took into the new den for a bed, and presently she lay down for her long winter's rest and let the snow drift over the doorway. Overhead the wind roared and howled, the frost grew keener, and the drifts piled up higher and higher; but, protected by her long, thick fur and by her heavy coat of fat, she was warm and comfortable. It was very dark and quiet, and there was nothing to do but lie still and drowse away the months, and let the tide of life run low while she waited for the winter to drag itself by.

There, late in January, her last babies were born, and even they did not seem, for a time, to make any great change in her life. They were very tiny babies, not much bigger than rats, very small indeed for so big and strong a mother; but it was just as well that

they were, for if they had been large and lusty, it would probably have been impossible for her to have kept them alive till spring, unable, as she was, to obtain any food for herself. They were blind and almost hairless, and it was no wonder that for a good while they were content to do little but lie quietly—except, perhaps, for a whimper now and then—in the long, warm fur that hung from her flanks. Gradually, however, their coats of short, greyish down grew into good suits of dark fur, thick and warm, though not yet to be compared to the old bear's for length or silkiness or blackness. When they were about six weeks old, their eyes opened, and by the faint, dim light that struggled in through the little hole in the front door they learned to know their mother by the sense of sight as well as of touch. They were growing a little larger and stronger, and as the weeks slipped by they became more and more active and playful, and sometimes made themselves a nuisance by their romping and frolicking in the narrow limits of the den, so that she had to cuff them to make them keep still. Fortunately the hole in the front door was so small this year that even they were unable to squeeze through, and she was spared the anxiety of having them out of her sight.

But the bear herself was growing very anxious to get out. The spring was late, and it seemed as if the ice that covered the den would never, never melt. She had apparently kept her flesh and seemed almost, if not quite, as plump as ever, in spite of the fact that she had eaten nothing for months and had been nursing her babies for many weeks; but though her outward appearance was unchanged, the winter had really brought a great strain upon her, and as soon as she began to move about, she would lose that apparent plumpness and become thin and lean and gaunt; and the longer she waited, the worse it would be. When at length the ice did wear thin, and she succeeded in breaking out, she did not seem at first to be much better off. Food was very hard to find left that spring. There were no beechnuts over from autumn, as there usually are, and even the frogs and mice and such small fry, who help to fill the bill of fare, and are not to be despised when you are really and truly as hungry as a bear in spring, were noticeably scarce. Perhaps the hard winter had killed off some of them. Moreover, during one of her first excursions in search of provender, the children came very near losing their lives, for she returned just in time to see a big grey Canada lynx entering the open door of the den. She got there before he could do any damage, stove in his skull with a single blow of her paw, and literally tore him to pieces.



"The cubs saw their mother practise the art of Izaak Walton."

Altogether things

did not go very smoothly. But after a while she had a piece of good luck which proved the beginning of better times, and, oddly enough, it was her worst enemy, man, who helped her out. Some lumbermen who had spent the winter eight or ten miles from her den had had a quantity of provisions left over when the break-up came, and the tote-road across the swamp was by that time so badly flooded by the melting snows that it was impossible to haul this remnant out to the railway. The only thing to do with it was to nail it up in the cook-camp and leave it there, and one day the bear came along, clambered up on to the roof, ripped off several cedar splits, and jumped down among the bags and boxes and barrels. For several weeks thereafter, whenever she was particularly hungry, she visited the lumber-camp and feasted on salt pork, corned beef, flour, dried apples, prunes, and, best of all, brown sugar and molasses. She even sampled the cayenne pepper, the baking powder, and the tea, though one taste of each of these was enough. By the time these supplies were completely exhausted the season of scarcity was over and food was no longer difficult to find.

Through the late spring and early summer she and the cubs spent a good deal of time in the low, wet lands along the streams and the borders of the ponds, where juicy water plants and succulent roots were to be had, to say nothing of crawfish and suckers. The mosquitoes were very troublesome at times, but the bear's long, thick hair was a great protection, and out on the breezy marshes and along the shores of the Glimmerglass one could often be entirely free from them. Later in the summer they took to the wide, open spaces where huckleberries and blackberries were to be found, and to the old burnings and windfalls where raspberry and blackberry bushes had sprung up in the dead and blackened timber, or they roamed the woods far and wide in search of cherry trees. They dug out yellow-jackets' nests and devoured the honey and the grubs. They regaled themselves on frogs and the smaller quadrupeds. Once or twice the mother killed a fawn, and once she slew a doe that tried to defend her offspring. They visited a settler's garden by night, helped themselves to his green peas, and nearly frightened his horse into a fit. On one occasion the old bear, under cover of the darkness, walked right up to his house and stole a pan of biscuits that stood on a table just inside an open window. That was the only taste they ever had of real home cooking. Once in a while they went fishing. The first time the cubs ever saw their mother practise the art of Izaak Walton she had walked out a little way upon a tree that leaned over the river and was lying sprawled upon its nearly horizontal trunk, looking down into the water and thinking about nothing in particular, when a sucker came along and paused for a moment right under her nose. She reached down and made a quick grab at him, only to see him swim away unhurt, and in a moment more she had seated herself in the shallow water and was waiting for another to appear. He came before long, swimming carelessly up the stream and apparently paying no attention to her, or, perhaps, taking her for a big, black stone, so motionless did she sit. She waited till he was close alongside, and then, quick as a flash, her paw shot out, and the sucker had the narrowest escape of his life. The third time she succeeded, and a wriggling, squirming fish was tossed high and dry on the bank, the first of many who went that way.

So the months slipped by, and at length the season of beechnuts came round again. This time the delicious little, brown, three-cornered things were very plentiful, and the three bears were soon fatter than ever before. The cubs had grown marvellously, and the mother had good reason to be proud of her children. In truth, she had taken a great deal of comfort with them, and this last summer of her life was probably her happiest. From early infancy they had been very promising youngsters, unusually bright and active. One of their favourite diversions was to stand up on their hind-legs and have a boxing or wrestling match, while their mother looked on and enjoyed the sport almost as much as they. Sometimes, however, one of the cubs would strike a little too hard, and then the other would let his angry passions rise, and the good-natured tussle would become a real fight, in which the babies would bite and pummel each other till the old bear would be obliged to interfere and give both of them a good sound cuffing. They early learned to climb, and in a tree-top they were very nimble, much more so than their stout and heavy mother would ever be again. Yet they were no longer featherweights. While they were quite small she had had a way of sitting up with her back to a tree and holding them one on each arm, as a human mother would have done, but she had been obliged to give up the habit before many months had passed. By early summer they were as

"They dug out yellow-jackets' nests."

large as the old raccoon that they sometimes met in their rambles, and now that the autumn had come they were as tall as a big dog, and much heavier. They were large enough, old enough, and wise enough in the ways of the woods to take care of themselves if that had been necessary. It was not necessary, however—or, at least, it did not seem to be, for their mother meant to keep them to herself for a while longer. When the cold weather and the deep snows should come, they would all three "hole up" in the same den and spend the winter together, and next year she would turn them out into the world, each one to paddle his own canoe. That was her plan—or, at least, it was what she would have done in the ordinary course of nature. But in Indian summer came the last great test of courage, and this time she was ready for it.

A land-looker and his assistant were camping beside the Tequamenon, and one night, as they lay between their blankets, they got to talking about bears. The assistant was frankly afraid of them, but the land-looker himself professed the greatest contempt for the biggest and fiercest black bear that ever lived.

"A bear is nothing but a great big game of bluff," he declared. "Talk about she-bears with cubs—once, a good many years ago, Jim Murphy and I found two little cubs not more than four or five months old, and we teased them for five minutes, and made them holler and squeal, just to see if their mother would tackle us. We could hear her ramming around in the bushes, and she growled and roared at us as if she was going to come right out and eat us up. Several times she came charging up to within fifteen or twenty feet. But she always kept just out of sight. We'd see the bushes shake, but we never once got a sight of her; and at length we killed the cubs and went off and left them there. I guess she was about the maddest bear that ever lived, but she didn't have nerve enough to come out and fight. It was great sport. I'd like to have a chance to try it again."

His chance came the next day, for as they were tramping along through the hardwood, they came upon three bears up in a beech tree—an old one and two cubs of the previous winter. Paying no attention to the protests of the other man, the land-looker took his half-axe and attacked the beech. The two smaller bears rushed up into the top of the tree, as high as they dared go, but the big one growled and made as if she meant to descend.

"She's coming down!" cried the man who was looking on.

The land-looker glanced up.

"Naw, she isn't," he said; "she's just bluffing."

Perhaps it really was a bluff; or, perhaps, for the moment, she could not quite make up her mind. At any rate, she did not come down till the tree did. Then she dropped with all her muscles limp and relaxed, and the fall hurt her no more than if she had been a rubber ball. In the meantime, the land-looker's assistant had been imploring him to be careful, with the result that he was growing more and more reckless, and when, at length, the tree struck the ground, he rushed up, with his revolver in his hand, and gave one of the cubs a kick. The cub squealed, and then it was that our friend showed the stuff she was made of. Once before she and this land-looker had met, though neither of them recognised the other. The first time, she had not been equal to the emergency; but she had grown since then, —grown in courage and in readiness to do whatever the occasion might demand—as well as in size and strength. The passing of the years, the battle of life, the struggle for food, the fights with the moose and with other forest creatures, the killing of the lynx, the heavy draft on her nerve when she had had to gnaw off her own foot to free herself from the steel trap, and, perhaps more than anything else, the putting to flight of the river-driver, had each and all had their effect, and she was ready for business. With a long fierce growl, "Gnar-r-r-r-r!!!" that came from far down in her throat, she sprang forward, and the land-looker became white as he suddenly realised that he had made a mistake and that the old she-bear was in earnest. Then he began to pump the lead into her.

All the good-nature and benevolence had vanished from her countenance, and she had forgotten her fears—forgotten that she had ever been afraid of anything in the world—forgotten everything, indeed, but the fierce desire to get hold of that man and kill him. With her head down and her ears drawn back, her lips curled away from her teeth, and her little black eyes snapping with rage and hate, she charged the land-looker, who was firing as fast as he could pull the trigger of his self-cocking revolver. Three bullets hit her before she reached him, but she paid no more attention to them than if they had been so many mosquitoes, and her first blow sent the revolver flying. In another instant she was hugging him, and the long, sharp claws of her hind-feet were tearing at his limbs. They went down in a heap, the bear on top, and for a moment he slashed at her with his knife. Then she lifted her great arm, and one of her huge fore-paws came down on the side of his head with a stroke that crushed his skull like an eggshell.

The other man had some grit, in spite of his caution, and by this time he had got hold of the revolver and had opened fire. But there were only two cartridges left, and when they were gone and he saw her coming for him as she had made for the land-looker, he took to his heels and ran. She chased him till he was out of sight, and then turned back, with five bullets in her body, to where the cubs were sniffing around the body of the dead man. She called them to come away, and they obeyed rather reluctantly. Over a ridge and down into a marsh she led them, across a small arm of Tequamenon, and through a thicket, a windfall, and a burning, back to the little sandy ridge in the cedar swamp, and there she lay down on the ground at the door of the last winter's den, beside the fallen pine. There were great splashes of blood along her trail, and she was weak and tired and dizzy. It was growing dark, though the sun was still two hours high, and she shut her eyes and dropped her head on her paws.

She never lifted it again, but the cubs were saved, and if some trapper hasn't got them, they are probably roaming the Great Tequamenon Swamp this very day.

AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames – a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Sheltered awhile in a Buddhist monastery, they hear of the recent visit of a stranger who has told the Lamas that his countryfolk, "dwelling beyond the Far Mountains," worship a priestess called Hes, or the Hesea, and upon persuasion the abbot of the monastery tells them that in a former incarnation he himself has seen the great priestess, who was "all loveliness." A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." The symbol vanishes, the fire sinks, but they are sure that as it was sent of old to show them a path of escape from the Place of Death, so now it has been sent again in greeting to point out the path to the Place of Life where Ayesha dwells. A further ascent into the mountains reveals their Promised Land, with the symbol of their vision, an enormous pillar of rock, whereof the top was formed to the shape of a loop. Peril by avalanche and glacier intervenes, but brings them slowly nearer to their hopes.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE GATE.

H! that rush through space! Folk falling thus are supposed to lose consciousness, but I can assert that this is not true. Never were my wits and perceptions more lively than while I travelled from that broken glacier to the ground, and never did a short journey seem to take a longer time. I saw the white floor, like some living thing, leaping up through empty air to meet me, then—*finis!*

Crash! Why, what was this? I still lived. I was in water, for I could feel its chill, and going down, down, till I thought I should never rise again. But rise I did, though my lungs were nigh to bursting first. As I floated up towards the top I remembered the crash, which told me that I had passed through ice. Therefore I should meet ice at the surface again. Oh! to think that after surviving so much I must be drowned like a kitten and beneath a sheet of ice! My hands touched it. There it was above me, shining white like glass. Heaven be praised! My head broke through; in this low and sheltered gorge it was but a film no thicker than a penny, formed by the light frost of the previous night. So I rose from the deep and stared about me, treading water with my feet.

Then I saw the gladdest sight that ever my eyes beheld, for on the right, not ten yards away, the water running from his hair and beard, was Leo. Leo alive, for he broke the thin ice with his arms as he struggled towards the shore from the deep river.* He saw me also, and his grey eyes seemed to start out of his head.

"Still living, both of us, and the precipice passed!" he shouted in a ringing, exultant voice. "I told you we were led."

"Aye, but whither?" I answered, as I, too, fought my way through the film of ice.

Then it was I became aware that we were no longer alone, for on the bank of the river, some thirty yards from us, stood two figures, a man leaning upon a long staff, and a woman. He was a very old man,

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* Usually, as we learned afterwards, the river at this spot was quite shallow—only a foot or two in depth. It was the avalanche that, by damming it with fallen heaps of snow, had raised its level very many feet. Therefore, to this avalanche, which had threatened to destroy us, we in reality owe our lives; for had the stream stood only at its normal height, we must have been dashed to pieces upon its stones.—L. H. H.

for his eyes were horny, his snow-white hair and beard hung upon the bent breast and shoulders, and his sardonic, wrinkled features were yellow as wax. They might have been those of a death-mask cut in marble. There, clad in an ample, monkish robe, and leaning upon the staff, he stood still as a statue and watched us. I noted it all, every detail, although at the time I did not know that I was doing so, as we broke our way through the ice towards them, and afterwards the picture came back to me. Also I saw that the woman, who was very tall, pointed to us.

Nearer the bank, or rather to the rock edge of the river, its surface was free of ice, for here the stream ran very swiftly. Seeing this, we drew close together and swam on side by side, to help each other if need were. There was much need, for in the fringe of the torrent the strength that had served me so long seemed to desert me, and I became helpless; numbed, too, with the biting coldness of the water. Indeed, had not Leo grasped my clothes, I think that I should have been swept away by the current to perish. Thus aided, I fought on a while, till he said—

"I am going under. Hold to the rope end."

So I gripped the strip of yak's hide that was still fast about him, and, his hand thus freed, Leo made a last splendid effort to keep us both, cumbered as we were with the thick, soaked garments that dragged us down like lead, from being sucked beneath the surface. Moreover, he succeeded where any other swimmer of less strength must have failed. Still, I believe that we should have drowned, since here the water ran like a mill-race, had not the man upon the shore, seeing our plight and urged thereto by the woman, run, with surprising swiftness in one so aged, to a point of rock that jutted some yards into the stream, past which we were being swept, and seating himself, stretched out his long stick towards us.

With a desperate endeavour, Leo grasped it as we went by, rolling over and over each other, and held on. Round we swung into the eddy, found our feet, were knocked down again, rubbed and pounded on the rocks. But still gripping that staff of salvation, to his end of which the old man clung like a limpet to a stone, while the woman clung to him, we recovered ourselves and, sheltered somewhat by the rock, floundered towards the shore. Lying on his face—for we were still in great danger—the man extended his arm. We could not reach it; and worse, suddenly the staff was torn from him—we were being swept away.

Then it was that the woman did a noble thing, for springing into the water—yes, up to her armpits—and holding fast to the old man by her left hand, with the right she seized Leo's hair and dragged him shorewards. Now he found his feet for a moment, and throwing one arm about her slender form, steadied himself thus, while with the other he supported me. Next followed a long, confused struggle, but the end of it was that three of us, the old man, Leo, and I, rolled in a heap upon the bank and lay there gasping.

Presently I looked up. The woman stood over us, water streaming from her garments, staring like one in a dream at Leo's face, smothered as it was with blood running from a deep cut in his head. Even then I noticed how stately and beautiful she was. Now she seemed to awake and, glancing at the robes that clung to her splendid shape, said something to her companion, then turned and ran towards the cliff.

As we lay before him, utterly exhausted, the old man, who had risen, contemplated us solemnly with his dim eyes. He spoke, but we did not understand. Again he tried another language, but without success. A third time, and our ears were opened, for the tongue he used was Greek; yes, there in Central Asia he addressed us in Greek—not very pure, it is true, but still Greek.

"Are you wizards," he said, "that you have lived to reach this land?"

"Nay," I answered in the same tongue, though in broken words—since of Greek I had thought little for many a year—"for then we should have come otherwise," and I pointed to our hurts and the precipice behind us.

"They know the ancient speech; it is as we were told from the Mountain," he muttered to himself. Then he asked—

"Strangers, what seek you?"

Now I grew cunning and did not answer, fearing lest, should he learn the truth, he would thrust us back into the river. But Leo had no such caution—or, rather, all reason had left him; he was light-headed.

"We seek," he stuttered out—his Greek, which had always been feeble, now was simply barbarous and mixed with various Thibetan dialects—"we seek the land of the Fire Mountain that is crowned with the Sign of Life."

The man stared at us. "So you know," he said, then broke off and added: "And *whom* do you seek?"

"Throwing one arm about her slender form, steadied himself thus, while with the other he supported me."

"Her," answered Leo wildly—"the Queen." I think that he meant to say the priestess, or the goddess, but could only think of the Greek for queen, or rather something resembling it. Or perhaps it was because the woman who had gone looked like a queen.

"Oh!" said the man, "you seek a queen—then you *are* those for whom we were bidden to watch. Nay, how can I be sure?"

"Is this a time to put questions?" I gasped angrily. "Answer me one rather: who are you?"

"I? Strangers, my title is Guardian of the Gate, and the lady who was with me is the Khania of Kaloon."

At this point Leo began to faint.

"That man is sick," said the Guardian, "and now that you have got your breath again, you must have shelter, both of you, and at once. Come, help me."

So, supporting Leo on either side, we dragged ourselves away from that accursed cliff and Styx-like river up a narrow, winding gorge. Presently it opened out, and there, stretching across the glade, we saw the Gate. Of this all I observed then—for my memory of the details of this scene and of the conversation that passed is very weak and blurred—was that it seemed to be a mighty wall of rock in which a pathway had been hollowed where doubtless once passed the road. On one side of this passage was a stair, which we began to ascend with great difficulty, for Leo was now almost senseless and scarcely moved his legs. Indeed, at the head of the first flight he sank down in a heap, nor did our strength suffice to lift him.

While I wondered feebly what was to be done, I heard footsteps, and looking up, saw the woman who had saved him descending the stair, and after her two robed men with a Tartar cast of countenance, very impassive, small eyes and yellowish skin. Even the sight of us did not appear to move them to astonishment. She spoke some words to them, whereon they lifted Leo's heavy frame, apparently with ease, and carried him up the steps.

We followed, and reached a room that seemed to be hewn from the rock above the gateway, where the woman called Khania left us. From it we passed through other rooms, one of them a kind of kitchen, in which a fire burned, till we came to a large chamber, evidently a sleeping-place, for in it were wooden bedsteads, mattresses, and rugs. Here Leo was laid down, and with the assistance of one of his servants, the old Guardian undressed him, at the same time motioning me to take off my own garments. This for the first time during many days I did gladly enough, though with great pain and difficulty, to find that I was a mass of wounds and bruises.

Presently our host blew upon a whistle, and the other servant appeared, bringing hot water in a jar, with which we were washed over. Then the Guardian dressed our hurts with some soothing ointment, and wrapped us round with blankets. After this, broth was brought, into which he mixed medicine, and giving me a portion of it to drink where I lay upon one of the beds, he took Leo's head upon his knee and poured the rest of it down his throat. Instantly a wonderful warmth ran through me, and my aching brain began to swim. Then I remembered no more.

* * * * *

After this we were very, very ill. What may be the exact medical definition of our sickness, I do not know, but in effect it was such as follows loss of blood, extreme exhaustion of body, paralysing shock to the nerves, and extensive cuts and contusions. These taken together produced a long period of semi-unconsciousness, followed by another period of fever and delirium. All that I can recall of those weeks while we remained the guests of the Guardian of the Gate may be summed up in one word—dreams; that is, until at last I recovered my senses.

The dreams themselves are forgotten, which is perhaps as well, as they were very confused and for the most part awful: a hotch-potch of nightmares, reflected without doubt from vivid memories of our recent and fearsome sufferings. At times I would wake up from them a little—I suppose when food was administered to me—and receive impressions of whatever was passing in the place. Thus I can recollect that yellow-faced old Guardian standing over me like a ghost in the moonlight, stroking his long beard, his eyes fixed upon my face, as though he would search out the secrets of my soul.

"They are the men," he muttered to himself; "without doubt they are the men," then walked to the window and looked up long and earnestly, like one who studies the stars.

After this I remember a disturbance in the room, and dominating it, as it were, the rich sound of a woman's voice and the rustle of a woman's silks sweeping the stone floor. I opened my eyes and saw that it was she who had helped to rescue us—who *had*

rescued us, in fact—a tall and noble-looking lady with a beauteous, weary face and liquid eyes which seemed to burn. From the heavy cloak she wore I thought that she must have just returned from a journey.

She stood above me and looked at me, then turned away with a gesture of indifference, if not of disgust, speaking to the Guardian in a low voice. By way of answer he bowed, pointing to the other bed where Leo lay asleep, and thither she passed with slow, imperious movements. I saw her bend down and lift the corner of a wrapping which covered his wounded head, and heard her utter some smothered words before she turned round to the Guardian as though to question him further.

But he had gone, and being alone, for she thought me senseless, she drew a rough stool to the side of the bed and, seating herself, studied Leo, who lay thereon, with an earnestness that was almost terrible, for her soul seemed to be concentrated in her eyes and to find expression through them. Long she gazed thus, then rose and began to walk swiftly up and down the chamber, pressing her hands now to her bosom and now to her brow, a certain passionate perplexity stamped upon her face, as though she struggled to remember something and could not.

"Where and when?", she whispered. "Oh! where and when?"

Of the end of that scene I know nothing, for although I fought hard against it, oblivion mastered me. After this I became aware that the regal-looking woman called Khania was always in the room, and that she seemed to be nursing Leo with great care and tenderness. Sometimes even she nursed me when Leo did not need attention, and she had nothing else to do, or so her manner seemed to suggest. It was as though I excited her curiosity, and she wished me to recover that it might be satisfied.

Again I awoke, how long afterwards I cannot say. It was night, and the room was lighted by the moon only, now shining in a clear sky. Its steady rays, entering at the window-place, fell on Leo's bed, and by them I saw that the dark, imperial woman was watching at his side. Some sense of her presence must have communicated itself to him, for he began to mutter in his sleep, now in English, now in Arabic. She became intensely interested, as her every movement showed. Then, rising suddenly, she glided across the room on tiptoe to look at me. Seeing her coming, I feigned to be asleep, and so well that she was deceived.

For I was also interested. Who was this lady whom the Guardian had called the Khania of Kaloon? Could it be she whom we sought? Why not? And yet if I saw Ayesha, surely I should know her, surely there would be no room for doubt?

Back she went again to the bed, kneeling down beside Leo, and in the intense silence that followed—for he had ceased his mutterings—I thought that I could hear the beating of her heart. Now she began to speak, very low and in that same bastard Greek tongue, mixed here and there with Mongolian words such as are common to the dialects of Central Asia. I could not hear or understand all she said, but some sentences I did understand, and they frightened me not a little.

"Man of my dreams," she murmured, "whence come you? Who are you? Why did the Hesea bid me to meet you?" Then some sentences I could not catch. "You sleep; in sleep the eyes are opened. Answer, I bid you; say what is the bond between you and me? Why have I dreamt of you? Why do I know you? Why——?" and the sweet, rich voice died slowly from a whisper into silence, as though she were ashamed to utter what was on her tongue.

As she bent over him, a lock of her hair broke loose from its jewelled fillet and fell across his face. At its touch Leo seemed to wake, for he lifted his gaunt, white hand and touched the hair, then said in English—

"Where am I? Oh! I remember"; and their eyes met as he strove to lift himself and could not. Then he spoke again in his broken, stumbling Greek: "You are the lady who saved me from the water. Say, are you also that Queen whom I have sought so long and endured so much to find?"

"I know not," she answered in a voice as sweet as honey, a low, trembling voice; "but true it is I am a queen—if a Khania be a queen."

"Say then, Queen, do you remember me?"

"We have met in dreams," she answered. "I think that we have met in a past that is far away. Yes; I knew it when first I saw you there by the river. Stranger with the well-remembered face, tell me, I pray you, how you are named?"

"Leo Vincey."

She shook her head, whispering—

"I know not the name, yet you I know."

"You know me! How do you know me?" he said heavily, and seemed to sink again into slumber or swoon.

She watched him for awhile very intently.

Then, as though some force that she could not resist drew her, I saw her bend down her head over his sleeping face. Yes; and I saw her kiss him swiftly on the lips, then spring back, crimson to the hair, as though overwhelmed with shame at this victory of her mad passion.

Now it was that she discovered me.

Bewildered, fascinated, amazed, I had raised myself upon my bed, not knowing it; I suppose that I might see and hear the better. It was wrong, doubtless, but no common curiosity overmastered me, who had my share in all this story. More, it was foolish, but illness and wonder had killed my reason.

Yes, she saw me watching them, and such fury seemed to take hold of her that I thought my hour had come.

"Man! have you dared—— ?" she said in an intense whisper, and snatching at her girdle. Now in her hand shone a knife, and I knew that it was destined for my heart. Then in this sore danger my wit came back to me, and as she advanced I stretched out my shaking hand, saying—

"Oh! of your pity, give me to drink! The fever burns me, it burns!" and I looked round like one bewildered who sees not, repeating: "Give me drink, you who are called Guardian," and I fell back exhausted.

She stopped like a hawk in its stoop and swiftly sheathed the dagger. Then taking a bowl of milk that stood on a table near her, she held it to my lips, searching my face the while with her flaming eyes, for indeed passion, rage, and fear had lit them till they seemed to flame. I drank the milk in great gulps, though never in my life did I find it more hard to swallow.

"You tremble," she said. "Have dreams haunted you?"

"Aye, friend," I answered—"dreams of that fearful precipice and of the last leap."

"Aught else?" she asked.

"Nay; is it not enough? Oh! what a journey to have taken to befriend a queen!"

"To befriend a queen!" she repeated, puzzled. "What means the man? You swear you have had no other dreams?"

"Aye, I swear by the Symbol of Life and the Mount of the Wavering Flame, and by yourself, O Queen from the ancient days!"

Then I sighed and pretended to swoon, for I could think of nothing else to do. As I closed my eyes I saw her face, that had been red as dawn, turn pale as eve, for my words and all which might lie behind them had gone home. Moreover, she was in doubt, for I could hear her fingering the handle of the dagger. Then she spoke aloud, words for my ears if they still were open.

"I am glad," she said, "that he dreamed no other dreams; since had he done so and babbled of them, it would have been ill-omened, and I do not wish that one who has travelled far to visit us should be hurled to the death-dogs for burial; one, moreover, who, although old and hideous, still has the air of a wise and silent man."

Now while I shivered at these unpleasant hints—though what the "death-dogs" in which people were buried might be, I could not conceive—to my intense joy I heard the foot of the Guardian on the stair; heard him, too, enter the room, and saw him bow before the lady.

"How go these sick men, niece*?" he said in his cold voice.

"They swoon, both of them," she answered.

"Indeed, is it so? I thought otherwise. I thought they woke."

"What have you heard, Shaman (*i.e.*, wizard)?" she asked angrily.

"I? Oh! I heard the grating of a dagger in its sheath and the distant baying of the death-hounds."

"And what have you seen, Shaman," she asked again, "looking through the Gate you guard?"

"Strange sights, Khania, my niece. But—men awake from swoons."

"Aye," she answered. "So while this one sleeps, bear him to another chamber, for he needs change, and the lord yonder needs more space and untainted air."

The Guardian, whom she called "Shaman," or Magician, held a lamp in his hand, and by its light it was easy to see his face, which I watched out of the corner of my eye. I thought it wore a very strange expression—one, moreover, that alarmed me somewhat. From the beginning I had misdoubted me of this old man, whose cast of countenance was vindictive as it was able; now I was afraid of him.

"To which chamber, Khania?" he said with meaning.

"I think," she answered slowly, "to one that is healthful, where he will recover. The man has wisdom," she added as though in explanation; "moreover, having the word from the Mountain, to harm him would be dangerous. But why do you ask?"

* I found later that the Khania, Atene, was not Simbri's niece, but his great-niece, on the mother's side.—L. H. H.

"'Man! have you dared—?'"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I tell you I heard the death-hounds bay, that is all. Yes, with you I think that he has wisdom, and the bee which seeks honey should suck the flower—before it fades! Also, as you say, there are commands with which it is ill to trifle, even if we cannot guess their meaning."

Then going to the door, he blew upon his whistle, and instantly I heard the feet of his servants upon the stairs. He gave them an order, and gently enough they lifted the mattress on which I lay, and followed him down sundry passages and past some stairs into another chamber shaped like that we had left, but not so large, where they placed me upon a bed.

The Guardian watched me awhile to see that I did not wake. Next he stretched out his hand and felt my heart and pulse; an examination the results of which seemed to puzzle him, for he uttered a little exclamation and shook his head. After this he left the room, and I heard him bolt the door behind him. Then, being still very weak, I fell asleep in earnest.

When I awoke, it was broad daylight. My mind was clear, and I felt better than I

had done for many a day, signs by which I knew that the fever had left me and that I was on the high road to recovery. Now I remembered all the events of the previous night and was able to weigh them carefully. This, to be sure, I did for many reasons—among them that I knew I had been, and still was, in great danger.

I had seen and heard too much, and this woman called Khania guessed that I had seen and heard. Indeed, had it not been for my hints about the Symbol of Life and the Mount of Flame, after I had disarmed her first rage by my artifice, I felt sure that she would have ordered the old Guardian or Shaman to do me to death in this way or the other; sure also that he would not have hesitated to obey her. I had been spared partly because for some unknown reason she was afraid to kill me, and partly that she might learn how much I knew, although the "death-hounds had bayed," whatever that might mean. Well, up to the present I was safe, and for the rest I must take my chance. Moreover, it was necessary to be cautious, and, if need were, to feign ignorance. So, dismissing the matter of my own fate from my mind, I fell to considering the scene which I had witnessed and what might be it purport.

Was our quest at an end? Was this woman Ayesha? Leo had so dreamed, but he was still delirious, therefore here was little on which to lean. What seemed more to the point was that she herself evidently appeared to think that there existed some tie between her and this sick man. Why had she embraced him? I was sure that she could be no wanton, nor indeed would any woman indulge for its own sake in such folly with a stranger who hung between life and death. What she had done was done because irresistible impulse, born of knowledge, or at least of memories, drove her on, though mayhap the knowledge was imperfect and the memories were undefined. Who save Ayesha could have known anything of Leo in the past? None who lived upon the earth to-day.

And yet, why not, if what Kou-en the abbot and tens of millions of his fellow-worshippers believed were true? If the souls of human beings were, in fact, strictly limited in number and became the tenants of an endless succession of physical bodies which they change from time to time as we change our worn-out garments, why should not others have known him? For instance, that daughter of the Pharaohs who "caused him through love to break the vows that he had vowed" knew a certain Killikrates, a priest of "Isis whom the gods cherish and the demons obey"; even Amenartas, the mistress of magic.

Oh! now a light seemed to break upon me, a terrible light. What if Amenartas and this Khania, this woman with royalty stamped on every feature, should be the same? Would not that "magic of my own people that I have" of which she wrote upon the Sherd, enable her to pierce the darkness of the Past and recognise the man whom she had bewitched to love her, snatching him out of the very hand of the goddess? What if it were not Ayesha, but Amenartas reincarnate, who ruled this hidden land and once more sought to make the man she loved break through his vows? If so, knowing the evil that must come, I shook even at its shadow. The truth must be learned, but how?

Whilst I wondered, the door opened, and the sardonic, inscrutable-old-faced man, whom this Khania had called Magician, and who called the Khania niece, entered and stood before me.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST ORDEAL.

THE Shaman advanced to my side and asked me courteously how I fared.

I answered: "Better. Far better, O my host—but how are you named?"

"Simbri," he answered, "and, as I told you by the water, my title is Hereditary Guardian of the Gate. By profession I am the royal Physician in this land."

"Did you say physician or magician?" I asked carelessly, as though I had not caught the word. He gave me a curious look.

"I *said* physician, and it is well for you and your companion that I have some skill in my art. Otherwise I think perhaps you would not have been alive to-day, O my guest—but how are *you* named?"

"Holly," I said.

"O my guest Holly."

"Had it not been for the foresight that brought you and the lady Khania to the edge of yonder darksome river, certainly we should *not* have been alive, venerable Simbri, a foresight that seems to me to savour of magic in such a lonely place. That is why I thought you might have described yourself as a magician; though it is true that you may have been but fishing in those waters."

"Certainly I was fishing, stranger Holly—for men, and I caught two."

"Fishing by chance, host Simbri?"

"Nay, by design, guest Holly. My trade of physician includes the study of future events, for I am the chief of the Shamans or Seers of this land, and having been warned of your coming quite recently, I awaited your arrival."

"Indeed, that is strange, most courteous also. So here physician and magician mean the same."

"You say it," he answered with a grave bow; "but tell me, if you will, how did you find your way to a land whither visitors do not wander?"

"Oh!" I answered, "perhaps we are but travellers, or perhaps we also have studied—medicine."

"I think that you must have studied it deeply, since otherwise you would not have lived to cross those mountains in search of—now, what did you seek? Your companion, I think, spoke of a queen—yonder, on the banks of the torrent."

"Did he? Did he, indeed? Well, that is strange, since he seems to have found one; for surely that royal-looking lady, named Khania, who sprang into the stream and saved us, must be a queen."

"A queen she is, and a great one, for in our land Khania means queen; though how, friend Holly, a man who has lain senseless can have learned this I do not know. Nor do I know how you come to speak our language."

"That is simple, for the tongue you talk is very ancient, and as it chances in my own country it has been my lot to study and to teach it. It is Greek, but although it is still spoken in the world, how it reached these mountains I cannot say."

"I will tell you," he answered. "Many generations ago, a great conqueror born of the nation that spoke this tongue fought his way through the country to the south of us. He was driven back, but a general of his of another race advanced and crossed the mountains, and overcame the people of this land, bringing with him his master's language and his own worship. Here he established his dynasty, and here it remains, for being ringed in with deserts and with pathless mountain snows, we hold no converse with the outer world."

"Yes, I know something of that story; the conqueror was named Alexander, was he not?" I asked.

"He was so named, and the name of the general was Rassen, a native of a country called Egypt, or so our records tell us. His descendants hold the throne to this day, and the Khania is of his blood."

"Was the goddess whom he worshipped called Isis?"

"Nay," he answered, "she was called Hes."

"Which," I interrupted, "is but another title for Isis. Tell me, is her worship continued here? I ask because it is now dead in Egypt, which was its home."

"There is a temple on the Mountain yonder," he replied indifferently, "and in it are priests and priestesses who practise some ancient cult. But the real god of this people now, as long before the day of Rassen their conqueror, is the fire that dwells in this same Mountain, which from time to time breaks out and slays them."

"And does the goddess dwell in the fire?" I asked.

Again he searched my face with his cold eyes, then answered—

"Stranger Holly, I know nothing of any goddess. That Mountain is sacred, and to seek to learn its secrets is to die. Why do you ask such questions?"

"Only because I am curious in the matter of old religions, and seeing the Symbol of Life upon yonder peak, came hither to study yours, of which indeed a tradition still remains among the learned."

"Then abandon that study, friend Holly, for the road to it runs through the jaws of the death-hounds and the spears of savages. Nor, indeed, is there anything to learn."

"And what, physician, are the death-hounds?"

"Certain dogs to which, according to our ancient custom, all offenders against the law or the will of the Khan are cast to be torn to pieces."

"The will of the Khan! Has this Khania of yours a husband, then?"

"Aye," he answered, "her cousin, who was the ruler of half the land. Now they and the land are one. But you have talked enough; I am here to say that your food is ready," and he turned to leave the room.

"One more question, friend Simbri. How came I to this chamber, and where is my companion?"

"You were borne hither in your sleep; and see, the change has bettered you. Do you remember nothing?"

"Nothing, nothing at all," I answered earnestly. "But what of my friend?"

"He also is better. The Khania Atene nurses him."

"Atene?" I said. "That is an old Egyptian

name. It means the Disc of the Sun, and a woman who bore it thousands of years ago was famous for her beauty."

"Well, and is not my niece Atene beautiful?"

"How can I tell, O uncle of the Khania," I answered wearily, "who have scarcely seen her?"

Then he departed, and presently his yellow-faced, silent servants brought me food.

Later in the morning the door opened again, and through it, unattended, came the Khania Atene, who shut and bolted it behind her. This action did not reassure me; still, rising in my bed, I saluted her as best I could, although at heart I was afraid. She seemed to read my doubts, for she said—

"Lie down, and have no fear. At present you will come by no harm from me. Now, tell me what is the man called Leo to you? Your son? Nay, it cannot be, since—forgive me—light is not born of darkness."

"I have always thought that it was so born, Khania. Yet you are right; he is but my adopted son, and a man whom I love."

"Say, what seek you here?" she asked.

"We seek, Khania, whatsoever Fate shall bring us on yonder Mountain, that which is crowned with flame."

Her face paled at the words, but she answered in a steady voice—

"Then there you will find nothing but doom, if, indeed, you do not find it out before you reach its slopes, which are guarded by savage men. Yonder is the College of Hes, and to violate its Sanctuary is death to any man, death in the ever-burning fire."

"And who rules this College, Khania—a priestess?"

"Yes, a priestess, whose face I have never seen, for she is so old that she veils herself from curious eyes."

"Ah! she veils herself, does she?" I answered, as the blood went thrilling through my veins—I who remembered another who also was so old that she veiled herself from curious eyes. "Well, veiled or unveiled, we would visit her, trusting to find that we are welcome."

"That you shall not do," she said, "for it is unlawful, and I will not have your blood upon my hands."

"Which is the stronger," I asked of her, "you, Khania, or this priestess of the Mountain?"

"I am the stronger, Holly, for so you are named, are you not? Look you, at my need I can summon sixty thousand men in war, while she has naught but her priests and the fierce, untrained tribes."

"The sword is not the only power in the world," I answered. "Tell me, now, does this priestess ever visit the country of Kaloon?"

"Never, never; for by the ancient pact, made after the last great struggle long centuries ago between the College and the people of the Plain, it was decreed and sworn to that should she set her foot across the river, this means war to the end between us, and rule for the victor over both. Likewise, save when unguarded they bear their dead to burial, or for some such high purpose, no Khan or Khania of Kaloon ascends the Mountain."

"Which, then, is the true master—the Khan of Kaloon or the head of the College of Hes?" I asked again.

"In matters spiritual, the priestess of Hes, who is our Oracle and the voice of Heaven. In matters temporal, the Khan of Kaloon."

"The Khan. Ah! you are married, lady, are you not?"

"Aye," she answered, her face flushing. "And I will tell you what you soon must learn, if you have not learned it already: I am the wife of a madman, and he is—hateful to me."

"I *have* learned the last already, Khania." She looked at me with her piercing eyes.

"What! Did my uncle, the Shaman—he who is called Guardian—tell you? Nay, you saw, as I knew you saw, and it would have been best to slay you for—oh! what must you think of me?"

I made no answer, for in truth I did not know what to think, also I feared lest rash admissions should be followed by swift vengeance.

"You must believe," she went on, "that I, who have ever hated men, that I—I swear that it is true—whose lips are purer than those mountain snows, I, the Khania of Kaloon, whom they name Heart-of-Ice, am but a shameless thing." And, covering her face with her hand, she moaned in the bitterness of her distress.

"Nay," I said, "there may be reasons—explanations, if it pleases you to give them."

"Wanderer, there are such reasons; and since you know so much, you shall learn them also. Like that husband of mine, I have become mad. When first I saw the face of your companion, as I dragged him from the river, madness entered me, and I—I——"

"Loved him," I suggested. "Well, such

"Opposite to me stood the Khania."

things have happened before to people who were not mad."

"Oh!" she went on, "it was more than love. I was possessed, and that night I knew not what I did. A Power drove me on, a Destiny compelled me; and to the end I am his, and his alone. Yes, I am his, and I swear that he shall be mine"; and with this wild declaration, dangerous enough under the conditions, she turned and fled the room.

She was gone, and after the struggle, for such it was, I sank back exhausted. How came it that this sudden passion had mastered her? Who and what was this Khania, I wondered again, and—this was more to the point—who and what would Leo believe her to be? If only I could be with him before he said words or did deeds impossible to recall!

* * * * *

Three days went by, during which time I saw no more of the Khania, who—or so I was informed by Simbri, the Shaman—had returned to her city to make ready for us, her guests. I begged him to allow me to rejoin Leo, but he answered politely, though with much firmness, that my foster-son did better without me. Now I grew suspicious, fearing lest some harm had come to Leo, though how to discover the truth I knew not. In my anxiety I tried to convey a note to him, written upon a leaf of a water-stained pocket-book, but the yellow-faced servant refused to touch it, and Simbri said drily that he would have naught to do with writings which he could not read. At length, on the third night I made up my mind that, whatever the risk, with leave or without it, I would try to find him.

By this time I could walk well and, indeed, was almost strong again. So about midnight, when the moon was up, for I had no other light, I crept from my bed, threw on my garments, and taking a knife, which was the only weapon I possessed, opened the door of my room and started.

Now, when I was carried from the rock-chamber where Leo and I had been together, I took note of the way. First, reckoning from my sleeping-place, there was a passage thirty paces long, for I had counted the footfalls of my bearers. Then came a turn to the left and ten more paces of passage, and lastly, near certain steps running to some place unknown, another sharp turn to the right which led to our old chamber.

Down the long passage I walked stealthily and, although it was pitch dark, found the turn to the left, and followed it till I came to the second sharp turn to the right, that of the gallery from which rose the stairs. I crept round it, only to retreat, hastily enough, as well I might, for at the door of Leo's room, which she was in the act of locking on the outside, as I could see by the light of the lamp that she held in her hand, stood the Khania herself.

My first thought was to fly back to my own chamber, but I abandoned it, feeling sure that I should be seen. Therefore I determined, if she discovered me, to face the matter out and say that I was trying to find Leo and to learn how he fared. So I crouched against the wall and waited with a beating heart. I heard her sweep down the passage, and—yes—begin to mount the stair.

Now, what should I do? To try to reach Leo was useless, for she had locked the door with the key she held. Go back to bed? No, I would follow her, and if we met would make the same excuse. Thus I might get some tidings, or perhaps—a dagger-thrust.

So round the corner and up the steps I went, noiselessly as a snake. They were many and winding, like those of a church tower, but at length I came to the head of them, where was a little landing, and opening from it a door. It was a very ancient door; the light streamed through cracks where its panels had rotted, and from the room beyond came the sound of voices, those of the Shaman Simbri and the Khania.

"Have you learned aught, my niece?" I heard him say, and also heard her answer—

"A little. A very little."

Then in my thirst for knowledge I grew bold, and stealing to the door, looked through one of the cracks in its wood. Opposite to me, in the full flood of light thrown by a hanging lamp, her hand resting on a table at which Simbri was seated, stood the Khania. Truly she was a beauteous sight, for she wore robes of royal purple, and on her brow a little coronet of gold, beneath which her curling hair streamed down her shapely neck and bosom. Seeing her, I guessed at once that she had arrayed herself thus for some secret end, enhancing her loveliness by every art and grace that is known to woman. Simbri was looking at her earnestly, with fear and doubt written on even his cold, impassive features.

"What passed between you, then?" he asked, peering at her.

"I questioned him closely as to the reason

of his coming to this land, and wrung from him the answer that it was to seek some beauteous woman—he would say no more. I asked him if she were more beauteous than I am, and he replied with courtesy—nothing else, I think—that it would be hard to say, but that she had been different. Then I said that, though it behoved me not to speak of such a matter, there was no lady in Kaloon whom men held to be so fair as I; moreover, that I was its ruler, and that I and no other had saved him from the water. Aye, and I added that my heart told me I was the woman whom he sought."

"Have done, niece," said Simbri impatiently. "I would not hear of the arts you used—well enough, doubtless. What then?"

"Then he said that it might be so, since he thought that this woman was born again, and studied me awhile, asking me if I had ever 'passed through fire.' To this I replied that the only fires I had passed were those of the spirit, and that I dwelt in them now. He said, 'Show me your hair,' and I placed a lock of it in his hand. Presently he let it fall, and from that satchel which he wears about his neck drew out another tress of hair—oh! Simbri, my uncle, the loveliest hair that ever eyes beheld, for it was soft as silk, and reached from my coronet to the ground! Moreover, no raven's wing in the sunshine ever shone as did that fragrant tress.

"'Yours is beautiful,' he said; 'but see, they are not the same.'

"'Mayhap,' I answered, 'since no woman ever wore such locks.'

"'You are right,' he replied, 'for she whom I seek was more than a woman.'

"And then—and then—though I tried him in many ways, he would say no more, so, feeling hate against this unknown rising in my heart, and fearing lest I should utter words that were best unsaid, I left him. Now I bid you search the books which are open to your wisdom and tell me of this woman whom he seeks, who she is and where she dwells. Oh! search them swiftly, that I may find her and—kill her, if I can."

"Aye, if you can," answered the Shaman, "and if she lives to kill. But say, where shall we begin our quest? Now, this letter from the Mountain that the head-priest Oros sent to your court a while ago?"—and he selected a parchment from a pile which lay upon the table, and looked at her.

"Read," she said. "I would hear it again." So he read—

"From the Hesea of the House of Fire to Atene, Khania of Kaloon.

"My Sister,—Warning has reached me that two strangers of a Western race journey to your land, seeking my Oracle, of which they would ask a question. On the first day of the next moon, I command that Simbri, your great-uncle, the wise Shaman, Guardian of the Gate, shall be at his post watching the river in the gulf at the foot of the ancient road, for by that steep path the strangers travel. Let him aid them in all things and bring them safely to the Mountain, knowing that in this matter I shall hold him and you to account. Myself I will not meet them, since to do so would be to break the pact between our powers, which says that the Hesea of the Sanctuary visits not the territory of Kaloon, save in war. Also their coming is otherwise appointed."

"It would seem," said Simbri, laying down the parchment, "that these are no chance wanderers, since Hes awaits them."

"Aye, they are no chance wanderers, since my heart awaited one of them also. Yet the Hesea cannot be that woman, for reasons which are known to you."

"There are many women on the Mountain," suggested the Shaman in a dry voice, "if, indeed, any woman has to do with this matter."

"I at least have to do with it, and he shall not go to the Mountain."

"Hes is powerful, my niece, and beneath these smooth words of hers lies a dreadful threat. I say that she is mighty from of old, and has servants in the earth and air who warned her of the coming of these men, and will warn her of what befalls them. I know it, who hate her, and to your royal house of Rassen it has been known for many a generation. Therefore thwart her not, lest ill befall us all, for she is a spirit and terrible. She says that it is appointed that they shall go——"

"And I say it is appointed that he shall not go. Let the other go if he desires."

"Atene, be plain: what will you with the man called Leo—that he should become your lover?" asked the Shaman.

She stared him straight in the eyes and answered boldly—

"Nay, I will that he should become my husband."

"First he must will it, too, who seems to have no mind that way. Also, how can a woman have two husbands?"

She laid her hand upon his shoulder and said—

"I have no husband. You know it well, Simbri. I charge you, by the close bond of blood between us, brew me another draught——"

"That we may be bound yet closer in a bond of murder! Nay, Atene, I will not; already your sin lies heavy on my head. You are very fair; take the man in your own net, if you may, or let him be, which is better far."

"I cannot let him be. Would that I were able! I must love him as I must hate the other whom he loves, yet some power hardens his heart against me. Oh! great Shaman, you that peep and mutter, you who can read the future and the past, tell me what you have learned from your stars and divinations."

"Already I have sought through many a secret, toilsome hour and learned this, Atene," he answered. "You are right—the fate of yonder man is intertwined with yours; but between you and him there rises a mighty wall that my vision cannot pierce nor my familiars climb. Yet I am taught that in death you and he—aye, and I also—shall be very near together."

"Then come death!" she exclaimed with sullen pride, "for thence at least I'll pluck out my desire."

"Be not so sure," he answered, "for I think that the Power follows us even down this dark gulf of death. I think also that I feel the sleepless eyes of Hes watching our secret souls."

"Then blind them with the dust of illusions—as you can. To-morrow, also, saying nothing of their sex, send a messenger to the Mountain and tell the Hesea that two old strangers have arrived—mark you, *old*—but that they are very sick, that their limbs were broken in the river, and that when they have healed again, I will send them to ask the question of her Oracle—that is, some three moons hence. Perchance she may believe you and be content to wait; or if she does not, at least no more words. I must sleep, or my brain will burst. Give me that medicine which brings dreamless rest, for never did I need it more, who also feel eyes upon me," and she glanced towards the door.

Then I left, and not too soon, for as I crept down the darksome passage, I heard it open behind me.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEATH-HOUNDS.

It may have been ten o'clock on the following morning, or a little past it, when the Shaman Simbri came into my room and asked me how I had slept.

"Like a log," I answered, "like a log. A drugged man could not have rested more soundly."

"Indeed, friend Holly, and yet you look fatigued."

"My dreams troubled me somewhat," I answered. "I suffer from such things. But surely, from your face, friend Simbri, you cannot have slept at all, for never yet have I seen you wear so weary an air."

"I am weary," he said with a sigh. "Last night I spent on my business—watching at the Gates."

"What gates?" I asked. "Those by which we entered this kingdom; for, if so, I would rather watch than travel them."

"The Gates of the Past and of the Future. Yes, those by which you entered, if you will; for did you not travel out of a wondrous Past towards a Future that you cannot guess?"

"But both of which interest you," I suggested.

"Perhaps," he answered, then added: "I come to tell you that within an hour you are to start for the city, whither the Khania has but now gone on to make ready for you."

"Yes; only you told me that she had gone some days ago. Well, I am sound again and prepared to march. But say, how is my foster-son?"

"He mends, he mends. But you shall see him for yourself. It is the Khania's will. Here come the slaves bearing your robes, and with them I leave you."

So with their assistance I dressed myself, first in good, clean under-linen, then in wide woollen trousers and vest, and lastly in a fur-lined camel-hair robe dyed black that was very comfortable to wear, and in appearance not unlike a long overcoat. A flat cap of the same material and a pair of boots made of untanned hide completed my attire.

Scarcely was I ready when the yellow-faced servants, with many bows, took me by the hand and led me down the passages and stairs of the Gatehouse to its door. Here, to my great joy, I found Leo, looking pale and troubled, but otherwise as well as I could expect after his sickness. He was attired like myself, save that his garments were of a finer quality, and the overcoat was white, with a hood to it, added, I suppose, to protect the wound in his head from cold and the sun. This white dress I thought became him very well, also about it there was nothing grotesque or even remarkable. He sprang to me and seized my hand, asking how I

"Slaves took the leading ponies by the bridle."

fared and where I had been hidden away, a greeting of which, as I could see, the warmth was not lost upon Simbri, who stood by.

I answered, well enough now that we were together again, and for the rest I would tell him later.

Then they brought us palanquins, carried, each of them, by two ponies, one of which was harnessed ahead, and the other behind between long, shaft-like poles. In these we seated ourselves, and at a sign from Simbri, slaves took the leading ponies by the bridle, and we started, leaving behind us that grim old Gatehouse through which we were the first strangers to pass for many a generation.

For a mile or more our road ran down a winding, rocky gorge, till suddenly it took a turn, and the country of Kaloon lay stretched before us. At our feet was a river, probably the same with which we had made acquaintance in the gulf, where, fed by the mountain snows, it had its source. Here it flowed rapidly, but on the vast, alluvial lands beneath became a broad and gentle stream that wound its way through the limitless plains till it was lost in the blue of the distance.

To the north, however, this smooth, monotonous expanse was broken by that Mountain which had guided us from afar, the House of Fire. It was a great distance from us, more than a hundred miles, I should say, yet even so a most majestic sight in that clear air. Many leagues from the base of its peak the ground began to rise in brown and rugged hillocks, from which sprang the holy Mountain itself, a white and dazzling point that soared full twenty thousand feet into the heavens.

Yes, and there upon the nether lip of its crater stood the gigantic pillar, surmounted by a yet more gigantic loop of virgin rock, whereof the blackness stood out grimly against the blue of the sky beyond and the blinding snow beneath.

We gazed at it with awe, as well we might, this beacon of our hopes that, for aught we knew, might also prove their monument, feeling even then that yonder our fate would declare itself. I noted further that all those with us did it reverence by bowing their heads as they caught sight of the peak, and by laying the first finger of the right hand across the first finger of the left, a gesture, as we afterwards discovered, designed to avert its evil influence. Yes, even Simbri bowed, a yielding to inherited superstition of which I should scarcely have suspected him.

"Have you ever journeyed to that Mountain?" asked Leo of him.

Simbri shook his head and answered evasively.

"The people of the Plain do not set foot upon the Mountain. Among its slopes, beyond the river which washes them, live hordes of brave and most savage men, with whom we are oftentimes at war; for when they are hungry, they raid our cattle and our crops. Moreover, there, when the Mountain labours, run red streams of molten rock, and now and again hot ashes fall that slay the traveller."

"Do the ashes ever fall in your country?" asked Leo.

"They have been known to do so when the Spirit of the Mountain is angry, and that is why we fear her."

"Who is this Spirit?" said Leo eagerly.

"I do not know, lord," he answered with impatience. "Can men see a spirit?"

"*You* look as though you might, and had, not so long ago," replied Leo, fixing his gaze on the old man's waxen face and uneasy eyes. For now their horny calm was gone from the eyes of Simbri, which seemed as though they had beheld some sight that haunted him.

"You do me too much honour, lord," he replied. "My skill and vision do not reach so far. But see, here is the landing-stage, where boats await us, for the rest of our journey is by water."

These boats proved to be roomy and comfortable, having flat bows and sterns, since, although sometimes a sail was hoisted, they were designed for towing, not to be rowed with oars. Leo and I entered the largest of them, and to our joy were left alone except for the steersman.

Behind us was another boat, in which were attendants and slaves, and some men who looked like soldiers, for they carried bows and swords. Now the ponies were taken from the palanquins, which were packed away, and ropes of green hide, fastened to iron rings in the prows of the boats, were fixed to the towing-tackle with which the animals had been reharnessed. Then we started, the ponies, two arranged tandem fashion to each punt, trotting along a well-made towing-path that was furnished with wooden bridges wherever canals or tributary streams entered the main river.

"Thank Heaven," said Leo, "we are together again at last! Do you remember, Horace, that when we entered the land of Kôr, it was thus, in a boat? The tale repeats itself."

"I can quite believe it," I answered. "I can believe anything. Leo, I say that we are but gnats meshed in a web, and yonder

Khania is the spider, and Simbri the Shaman guards the net. But tell me all you remember of what has happened to you; and be quick, for I do not know how long they may leave us alone."

"Well," he said, "of course I remember our arrival at that Gate after the lady and the old man had pulled us out of the river; and, Horace, talking of spiders reminds me of hanging at the end of that string of yak's hide. Not that I need much reminding, for I am not likely to forget it. Do you know I cut the rope because I felt that I was going mad, and wished to die sane? What happened to you? Did you slip?"

"No; I jumped after you. It seemed best to end together, so that we might begin again together."

"Brave old Horace!" he said affectionately, the tears starting to his grey eyes.

"Well, never mind all that," I broke in. "You see you were right when you said that we should get through, and we have. Now for your tale."

"It is interesting, but not very long," he answered, colouring. "I went to sleep, and when I woke it was to find a beautiful woman leaning over me; and, Horace—at first I thought that it was—you know who, and that she kissed me; but perhaps it was all a dream."

"It was no dream," I answered. "I saw it."

"I am sorry to hear it—very sorry. At any rate, there was the beautiful woman—the Khania—for I saw her plenty of times afterwards, and talked to her in my best modern Greek—by the way, Ayesha knew the old Greek; that's curious."

"She knew several of the ancient tongues, and so did other people. Go on."

"Well, she nursed me very kindly, but, so far as I know, until last night there was nothing more affectionate, and I had sense enough to refuse to talk about our somewhat eventful past. I pretended not to understand, said that we were explorers, etc., and kept asking her where you were, for I forgot to say I found that you had gone. I think that she grew rather angry with me, for she wanted to know something, and, as you can guess, I wanted to know a good deal. But I could get nothing out of her except that she was the Khania—a person in authority. There was no doubt about that, for when one of those slaves or servants came in and interrupted her while she was trying to draw the facts out of me, she called to some of her people to throw him out of the window, and he only saved himself by going down the stairs very quickly.

"Well, I could make nothing of her, and she could make little of me, though why she should be so tenderly interested in a stranger I don't know—unless, unless—oh! who is she, Horace?"

"If you will go on, I will tell you what I think presently. One tale at a time."

"Very good. I got quite well and strong, comparatively speaking, till the climax last night, which upset me again. After that old prophet, Simbri, had brought me my supper, just as I was thinking of going to sleep, the Khania came in alone, dressed like a queen. I can tell you she looked really royal, like a princess in a fairy book, with a crown on, and her chestnut black hair flowing round her.

"Well, Horace, then she began to make love to me in a refined sort of way, or so I thought, looked at me and sighed, saying that we had known each other in the past—very well indeed, I gathered—and implying that she wished to continue our friendship. I fenced with her as best I could; but a man feels fairly helpless lying on his back with a very handsome and very imperial-looking lady standing over him and paying him compliments.

"The end of it was that, driven to it by her questions, and to stop that sort of thing, I told her that I was looking for my wife, whom I had lost; for, after all, Ayesha is my wife, Horace. She smiled and suggested that I need not look far; in short, that the lost wife was already found—in herself, who had come to save me from death in the river. Indeed, she spoke with such conviction that I grew sure that she was not merely amusing herself, and felt very much inclined to believe her; for, after all, Ayesha may be changed now.

"Then while I was at my wits' end I remembered the lock of hair—all that remains to us of *her*," and Leo touched his breast. "I drew it out and compared it with the Khania's, and at the sight of it she became quite different—jealous, I suppose, for it is longer than hers, and not in the least like.

"Horace, I tell you that the touch of that lock of hair—for she did touch it—appeared to act upon her nature like nitric acid upon sham gold. It turned it black; all the bad in her came out. In her anger her voice sounded coarse; yes, she grew almost vulgar—and, as you know, when Ayesha was in a rage, she might be wicked as we understand

it, and was certainly terrible, but she was never either coarse or vulgar, any more than lightning is.

"Well, from that moment I was sure that, whoever this Khania may be, she has nothing to do with Ayesha; they are so different that they never could have been the same—like the hair. So I lay quiet and let her talk, and coax, and threaten on, until at length she drew herself up and marched from the room, and I heard her lock the door behind her. That's all I have to tell you; and quite enough, too, for I don't think that the Khania has done with me, and, to say the truth, I am afraid of her."

"Yes," I said, "quite enough. Now sit still, and don't start or talk loud, for that steersman is probably a spy, and I can feel old Simbri's eyes fixed upon our backs. Don't interrupt, either, for our time alone may be short."

Then I set to work and told him everything I knew, while he listened in blank astonishment.

"Great Heavens! what a tale!" he exclaimed as I finished. "Now, who is this Hesea who sent the letter from the Mountain? And who, who is the Khania?"

"Who does your instinct tell you that she is, Leo?"

"Amenartas?" he whispered doubtfully. "The woman who wrote the *Sherd*, whom Ayesha said was the Egyptian princess—my wife two thousand years ago? Amenartas re-born?"

I nodded. "I think so. Why not? As I have told you again and again, I have always been certain of one thing—that if we were allowed to see the next act of the piece, we should find Amenartas—or, rather, the spirit of Amenartas—playing a leading part in it. You will remember I wrote as much in that record.

"If the old Buddhist monk Kou-en could remember *his* past, as many thousands of them swear that they do, and be sure of his identity continued from that past, why should not this woman, with so much at stake, helped as she is by the wizardry of the Shaman, her uncle, faintly remember hers?

"At any rate, Leo, why should she not still be sufficiently under its influence to cause her, without any fault or seeking of her own, to fall madly in love at first sight with a man whom, after all, she has always loved?"

"The argument seems sound enough, Horace; and if so, I am sorry for the Khania, who hasn't much choice in the matter—been forced into it, so to speak."

"Yes, but meanwhile your foot is in a trap again. Guard yourself, Leo, guard yourself. I believe that this is a trial sent to you, and doubtless there will be more to follow. But I believe also that it would be better for you to die than to make any mistake."

"I know it well," he answered; "and you need not be afraid. Whatever this Khania may have been to me in the past—if she was anything at all—that story is done with. I seek Ayesha, and Ayesha alone, and Venus herself shall not tempt me from her."

Then we began to speak with hope and fear of that mysterious Hesea who had sent the letter from the Mountain, commanding the Shaman Simbri to meet us; the priestess or spirit whom he declared was "mighty from of old" and had "servants in the earth and air."

Presently the prow of our barge bumped against the bank of the river; and looking round, I saw that Simbri had left the boat in which he sat and was preparing to enter ours. This he did, and, placing himself gravely on a seat in front of us, explained that nightfall was coming on, and he wished to give us his company and protection through the dark.

"And to see that we do not give him the slip in it," muttered Leo.

Then the drivers whipped up their ponies, and we went on again.

"Look behind you," said Simbri presently, "and you will see the city where you will sleep to-night."

We turned ourselves, and there, about ten miles away, perceived a flat-roofed town of considerable, though not of very great, size. Its position was good, for it was set upon a large island that stood a hundred feet or more above the level of the plain, the river dividing into two branches at the foot of it, and, as we discovered afterwards, uniting again beyond.

The vast mound upon which this city was built had the appearance of being artificial, but very possibly the soil whereof it was formed had been washed up in past ages during times of flood, so that from a mudbank in the centre of the broad river it grew by degrees to its present proportions. With the exception of a columned and towered edifice that crowned the city and seemed to be encircled by gardens, we could see no great buildings in the place.

"How is the city named?" asked Leo of Simbri.

"Kaloon," he answered, "as was all this land even when my forefathers, the conquerors,

"As he passed, he turned his face . . . it was that of a madman."

marched across the mountains and took it, more than two thousand years ago. They kept the ancient title, but the territory of the Mountain they called Hes, because they said that the loop upon yonder peak was the symbol of a goddess of this name whom their general worshipped."

"Priestesses still live there, do they not?" said Leo.

"Yes, and priests also. The College of them was established by the conquerors, who subdued all the land. Or, rather, it took the place of another College of those who fashioned the Sanctuary and the Temple whose God was the fire in the Mountain, as it is that of the people of Kaloon to-day."

"Then who is worshipped there now?"

"The goddess Hes, it is said; but we know little of the matter, for between us and the Mountain folk there has been enmity for ages. They kill us and we kill them, for they are jealous of their shrine, which none may visit save by permission to consult the Oracle and to make prayer or offering in times of calamity, when a Khan dies, or the waters of the river sink and the crops fail, or when ashes fall and earthquakes shake the land, or great sickness comes. Otherwise, unless they attack us, we leave them alone; for though every man is trained to arms, and can fight if need be, we are a peaceful folk, who cultivate the soil from generation to generation, and thus grow rich. Look round you. Is it not a scene of peace?"

We stood up in the boat and gazed about us at the pastoral prospect. Everywhere appeared herds of cattle feeding upon meadow-lands, or troops of mules and horses, or square fields sown with corn and outlined with trees. Village folk also, clad in long, grey gowns, were labouring on the land, or, their day's toil finished, driving their beasts homewards along roads built upon the banks of the irrigation-dykes, towards the hamlets that were placed on rising knolls amidst tall groves of trees.

In its sharp contrast with the arid deserts and fearful mountains amongst which we had wandered for so many years, this country struck us as most charming, and, indeed, seen by the red light of the sinking sun on that spring day, even as beautiful with the same kind of beauty which is to be found in Holland. One could understand, too, that these landowners and peasant-farmers would by choice be men of peace, and what a temptation their wealth must offer to the hungry, half-savage tribes of the mountains.

Also it was easy to guess when the survivors of Alexander's legions under their Egyptian general burst through the iron band of snow-clad hills and saw this sweet country, with its homes, its herds, and its ripening grain, that they must have cried with one voice: "We will march and fight and toil no more. Here we will sit us down to live and die." Thus doubtless they did, taking them wives from among the women of the people of the land which they had conquered—perhaps after a single battle.

Now, as the light faded, the wreaths of smoke which hung over the distant Fire Mountain began to glow luridly. Redder and more angry did they become while the darkness gathered, till at length they seemed to be charged with pulsing sheets of flame propelled from the womb of the volcano, which threw piercing beams of light through the eye of the giant loop that crowned its brow. Far, far fled those beams, making a bright path across the land, and striking the white crests of the bordering wall of mountains. High in the air ran that path, over the dim roofs of the city of Kaloon, over the mountains, and doubtless—though there we could not follow them—across the desert to that high eminence on its farther side where we had lain bathed in their radiance. It was a wondrous and most impressive sight, one, too, that filled our companions with fear, for the steersmen in our boats and the drivers on the towing-path groaned aloud and began to utter prayers.

"What do they say?" asked Leo of Simbri.

"They say, lord, that the Spirit of the Mountain is angry, and pray her not to destroy them."

"Then does that light not always shine thus?" he asked again.

"Nay, but seldom. Once about three months ago, and now to-night, but before that not for years. Let us pray that it portends no evil to the land and its inhabitants."

For some minutes this fearsome illumination continued, then it ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and there remained of it only the dull glow above the crest of the peak.

Presently the moon rose, a white, shining ball, and by its rays we perceived that we drew near to the city. But there was still something left for us to see before we reached its shelter. While we sat quietly in the boat—for the silence was broken only by the lapping of the still waters against its sides and the occasional splash of the slackened tow-

line upon their surface—we heard a distant sound as of a hunt in full cry.

Nearer and nearer it came, its volume swelling every moment, till it was quite close at last. Now echoing from the trodden earth of the towing-path—not that on which our ponies travelled, but the other on the west bank of the river—was heard the beat of the hoofs of a horse galloping furiously. Presently it appeared, a fine, white animal, on the back of which sat a man. It passed us like a flash; but as he went by, the man lifted himself and turned his head, so that we saw his face in the moonlight; saw also the agony of fear that was written on it and in his eyes.

He had come out of the darkness. He was gone into the darkness, but after him swelled that awful music. Look! a dog appeared, a huge red dog, that dropped his foaming muzzle to the ground as it galloped, then lifted it and uttered a deep-throated, bell-like bay. Others followed, and yet others: in all there must have been a hundred of them, every one baying as it took the scent.

"*The death-hounds!*" I muttered, clasping Leo by the arm.

"Yes," he answered, "they are running that poor devil. Here comes the huntsman."

As he spoke there appeared a second figure, splendidly mounted, a cloak streaming from his shoulders, and in his hand a long whip, which he waved. He was big but loosely jointed; and as he passed, he turned his face also, and we saw that it was that of a madman. There could be no doubt of it; insanity blazed in those hollow eyes and rang in that savage, screeching laugh.

"The Khan! The Khan!" said Simbri, bowing, and I could see that he was afraid.

Now he, too, was gone, and after him came his guards. I counted eight of them, all carrying whips, with which they flogged their horses.

"What does this mean, friend Simbri?" I asked, as the sounds grew faint in the distance.

"It means, friend Holly," he answered, "that the Khan does justice in his own fashion—hunting to death one that has angered him."

"What, then, is his crime? And who is that poor man?"

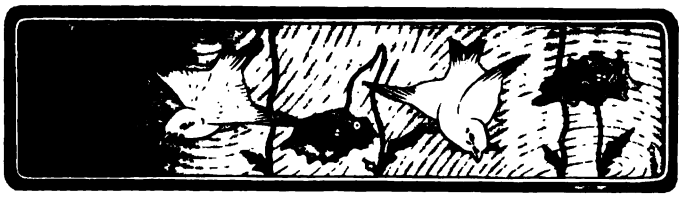
"He is a great lord of this land, one of the royal kinsmen, and the crime for which he has been condemned is that he told the Khania he loved her, and offered to make war upon her husband and kill him, if she would promise herself to him in marriage. But she hated the man, as she hates all men, and brought the matter before the Khan. That is all the story."

"Happy is that prince who has so virtuous a wife!" I could not help saying unctuously, but with meaning, and the old wretch of a Shaman turned his head at my words and began to stroke his white beard.

It was but a little while afterwards that once more we heard the baying of the death-hounds. Yes, they were heading straight for us, this time across country. Again the white horse and its rider appeared, utterly exhausted, both of them, for the poor beast could scarcely struggle on to the towing-path. As it gained it, a great red hound with a black ear gripped its flank, and at the touch of the fangs it screamed aloud in terror as only a horse can. The rider sprang from its back, and, to our horror, ran to the river's edge, thinking evidently to take refuge in our boat. But before ever he reached the water the devilish brutes were upon him.

What followed I will not describe, but never shall I forget the scene of those two heaps of worrying wolves, and of the maniac Khan, who yelled in his fiendish joy and cheered on his death-hounds to finish their red work.

(*To be continued.*)



HOLYHEAD HARBOUR.
The headquarters of the L. and N. W. Railway Company's Irish Channel Fleet.

THE SEA-POWER OF OUR RAILWAYS

BY CHARLES H. GRINLING.

JUST as it could be said of old that "all roads lead to Rome," so can it be said to-day that "all railways lead to the sea." The ocean is the natural goal of the railway-builder, because there he can join his artfully laid track to that great natural highway upon which ride the argosies of the world. The insular position of the United Kingdom, and the absolute dependence of the masses of our population upon foreign trade for their means of subsistence, make the connection between our railways and shipping a particularly close one. The connection is fundamentally the same as that between railways and road cartage, upon which I dwelt in the January issue of this magazine; but the alliance now under notice is a much more equal one than the other. No one would think of saying that the railway companies collected and delivered the traffic of our road carriers; one would always express the fact the other way round. But you can say the railways collect and deliver for the ships, or the ships collect and deliver for the railways, without risk of libelling the dignity of either party.

Yet, whereas no shipping company owns a railway, a good many railway companies own ships, and a still larger number of railway companies own docks and harbours. Railway companies have, indeed, created ports at not a few places on our coasts, and so brought into existence ships which otherwise could not have been launched for lack of facilities for obtaining cargoes. In short, the power of the railway extends over the sea as well as over the land; nearly every large railway company in the United Kingdom has a docks, harbour, or marine department, and quite a number of them would take leading rank as shipping or docks companies, or as both, were not the importance of these auxiliary undertakings quite overshadowed in most cases by the importance of the railway. In the full titles of several of them, however, the word "Dock" is to be found—*e.g.*, the "Hull, Barnsley, and West Riding Railway and Dock Company," and the "Port Talbot Railway and Docks Company," etc.; and in one or two cases we find "Docks" coming in front of "Railway," as in "Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway," "King's Lynn Docks and Railway," etc. In the case of the Furness Railway, it has been said that "the tail wags the dog," meaning by this that the company's excellent docks at Barrow are the most important part of its system, although they are not mentioned in its title. This remark would also apply to the Cardiff and to the Barry Railways.

To give an idea of the magnitude of the sea-power of our railways, let us briefly glance at the marine undertakings of the leading companies. The London and North-Western owns Holyhead Harbour, Greenore Harbour (Ireland), and Garston Docks (near Liverpool), and is joint owner with the Lancashire and Yorkshire of the docks at Fleetwood. Its Irish Channel fleet, plying between Holyhead and Dublin and Greenore, comprises sixteen steamships, and it has also a joint

ownership in the five vessels plying between Fleetwood, Belfast, Londonderry, and in the three between Stranraer and Larne, and is part owner of Stranraer Harbour. It also owns a screw-dredger. The Great Western is owner of docks and harbours at Plymouth, Llanelly, Briton Ferry, Brentford, Bridgwater, Newquay, and New Milford, and, in conjunction with the Great Southern and Western Railway Company of Ireland, it is building new harbours at Fishguard (Pembrokeshire) and at Rosslare (co. Wexford) for the Irish cross-Channel traffic. An excellent fleet of steamers owned by this company plies between Weymouth and the Channel Islands and between New Milford and Waterford, whilst tenders are supplied by it for embarking and disembarking passengers in connection with the Ocean liners at Plymouth, and a ferry service is conducted between Kingswear and Dartmouth. Altogether the Great Western owns sixteen ships.

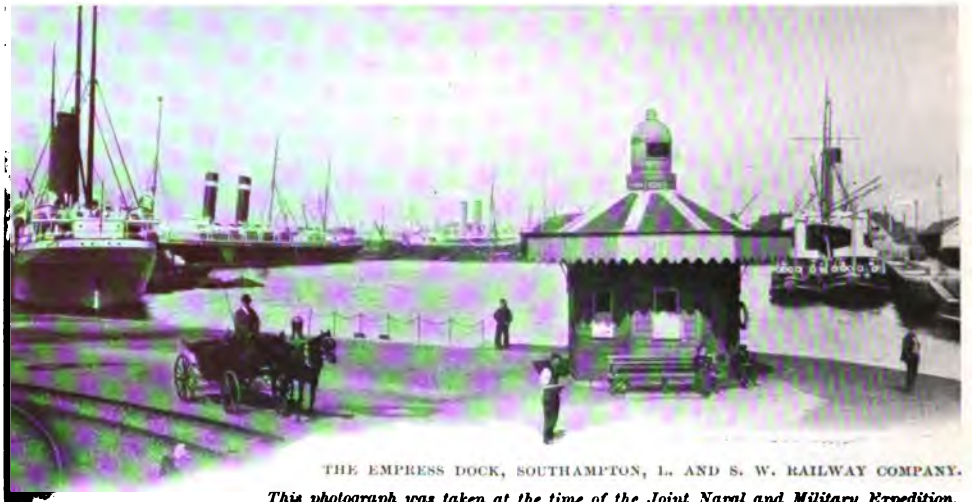
The North-Eastern owns no steamships at present, though it contemplates doing so and has an "interest" in the Hull and Netherlands Steamship Company. The North-Eastern's dock property is very extensive, comprising a whole system at Hull, another at Hartlepool, Tyne Dock (from which seven million tons of coal are annually exported), Middlesborough Dock, the North Dock at Monkwearmouth, and extensive coal-shipping staiths at Blyth and at Dunston-on-the-Tyne.

The Midland, although co-partner in the Stranraer and Larne fleet, and in some boats running from Barrow, had no marine department of its own until last year, when it opened an extensive harbour at Heysham in Lancashire and commenced running its own steamships between that place and Belfast and the Isle of Man, a fleet of four first-class steamers being provided for that purpose, two of which are propelled by turbines. The Great Central is owner of the docks at Grimsby and has a fleet of thirteen powerful steamers trading between that port and Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Hamburg. The Lancashire and Yorkshire owns the docks at Fleetwood, and jointly with the North-Western runs a fleet of five steamers thence to Belfast and Londonderry. It also has its own fleet of five steamers between Liverpool (Collingwood Dock) and Drogheda. This company has recently entered into an agreement to purchase the fleet of the Goole Shipping Company, and has obtained Parliamentary powers to trade between Goole and Hull and a large number of Continental ports.

The Great Eastern has nine passenger steamers and three cargo boats trading between Continental ports and Harwich, where it

TURBINE-STEAMER "PRINCESS MAUD."
Stranraer and Larne Joint Railway Steamship Service.

TWIN-SCREW STEAMER "CAMBRIA."
Holyhead and Dublin Express Passenger Service, L. and N. W. Railway Company.



THE EMPRESS DOCK, SOUTHAMPTON, L. AND S. W. RAILWAY COMPANY.

This photograph was taken at the time of the Joint Naval and Military Expedition, September, 1904, and shows some of the transports berthed.

has built the extensive Parkeston Quay and practically revolutionised the port. The Great Northern, alone amongst the northern lines of England, owns neither docks nor steamships. It made a contribution of £55,000 about twenty-five years ago towards the construction of a dock at Sutton Bridge, in Lincolnshire, but the site proved unsuitable. The dock refused to hold water, and has never been worked since the opening day —May 14, 1881.

Turning to the railway companies owning lines south of the Thames, we find that one of their main objects is to carry traffic between the Metropolis and the sea. The London and South-Western owes much of its importance to its ownership of the Southampton Docks, and it has a fleet of fifteen steamships trading between that port and the Channel Islands and France, the South-Western route *vid* Southampton and Havre being a favourite one with visitors to and from Paris. This company is also joint owner with the London, Brighton and South Coast of the excellent fleet which plies between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, whilst it runs two boats, all its own, between Lymington and Yarmouth (Isle of Wight), and has a tender at Plymouth. The Brighton, through the medium of a subsidiary undertaking, largely created Newhaven Harbour, which it works, besides owning the two boats which ply between that port and Caen. In partnership with the Western Railway of France, it also owns the thirteen vessels plying between Newhaven and Dieppe, to which the turbine-steamer *Brighton* was the latest addition. Its joint ownership of the Portsmouth and Isle of Wight boats has already been mentioned. The South-Eastern and Chatham are joint owners with the Northern Railway of France of the eighteen steamers which ply between Dover and Calais, and Folkestone and Boulogne, the newest of which, the *Queen*, is a turbine-vessel. This company also owns the harbours at Folkestone and Whitstable, and has provided steamship facilities at Port Victoria, Queenborough, Strood, Gravesend, Rye, and on the Admiralty Pier at Dover.

Coming to the Thames itself, we find that the North London Railway Company owns the docks at Poplar and gives facilities there for the traffic of the North-Western, Great Western, and Great Northern companies. The Great Western and North-Western companies have a joint riverside station and dock at Chelsea, while the Brighton Railway Company has similar accommodation on the river. The South-Eastern and Chatham have Angerstein's Wharf between Greenwich and Woolwich, and another wharf at Blackfriars. The Great Western has a wharf at Brentford which has already been mentioned, and the London, Tilbury and Southend owns six steam ferry-boats plying between Tilbury and Gravesend, etc.

The group of prosperous railway companies in South Wales were laid down principally for the conveyance of coal for export. The Taff Vale Company owns Penarth Dock and Harbour near Cardiff, and provides accommodation of a more or less extensive character at and in connection with the other ports which it serves. The Barry created Barry Dock, and its railways are

practically an appendage of that remarkable coal-shipping centre. The Cardiff was a dock company before it was a railway company, and is at the present time the owner of only three miles of railway in addition to the Bute Docks, Cardiff, and the extensive sidings connected therewith. The Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway Company, and the Port Talbot Railway and Docks Company have already been mentioned. The Cambrian has Parliamentary powers to work steamships, but has not yet exercised them. The Barry obtained powers to run a service across the Bristol Channel only last year.

THE NEW GRAVING-DOCK AT SOUTHAMPTON, L. AND S. W. RAILWAY CO.
The second longest in the United Kingdom.

Turning to Scotland, we find an equally close connection between railways and shipping. The North British owns docks or harbours, or both, at Methil, Burntisland, Bo'ness, Alloa, Charlestown, Kincardine, Tayport, Silloth, and Mallaig, the Caledonian at Grangemouth and Bowling, with the harbour of South Alloa and facilities at a number of other ports. The Glasgow and South-Western owns the harbour at Troon, Largs, and Fairlie, and holds a thirty years' lease of Ayr Harbour. All these three companies work excellent fleets of steamers on the Firth of Clyde, the North British and Glasgow and South-Western owning their boats outright, whilst the Caledonian does the business through the medium of a "controlled" Steam Packet Company which owns eleven vessels of 3,458 gross tonnage. The Glasgow and South-Western has a fleet of ten vessels of 4,847 tons gross, working in connection with its trains. The North British fleet now consists of seven steamers, headed by the *Waverley*, which was the last paddle-steamer built in the nineteenth century.

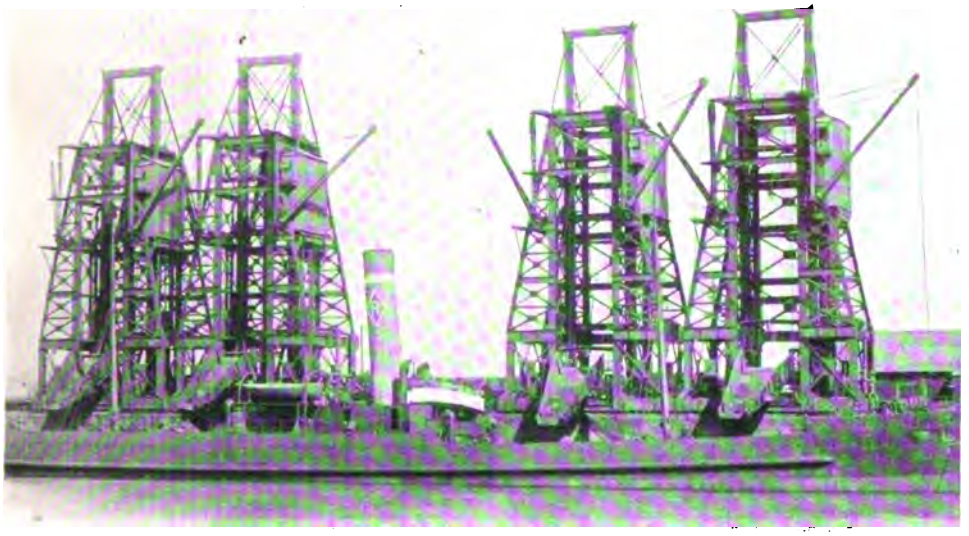
In Ireland, the London and North-Western created and owns the harbour at Greenore, and runs a paddle-steamer on Carlingford Lough in connection with its daily services to and from Holyhead. The North-Western has also provided extensive accommodation both for passengers and cargo on the North Wall, Dublin—also in connection with its Holyhead service. Ireland is so well provided with natural harbours that expenditure by railway companies in this direction has not been so necessary as in Great Britain; but, as already stated, a new harbour is now being constructed at Rosslare—the work

THE NEW COLD STORE AT SOUTHAMPTON DOCKS, L. AND S. W. RAILWAY COMPANY.
The largest in Europe.

being carried out by the Fishguard and Rosslare Railway and Harbours Company, which is practically a joint committee of the Great Western of England and the Great Southern and Western of Ireland. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Company is about to expend a considerable sum upon the improvement of the Port of Drogheda, to which, as already stated, it runs its own steamers. The Belfast and County Down Railway Company runs a daily steamer during the summer months between Belfast and Bangor (co. Down), and this boat also makes Lough trips to Donaghadee, and a weekly journey to Larne Harbour. It should have been stated previously that the Caledonian and Glasgow and South-Western companies are co-partners with the North-Western and Midland in the Stranraer Harbour and in the Stranraer and Larne steamboat service, to which joint fleet there was added last year a turbine-vessel, *Princess Maud*. Allusion should also be made to the two steamers, the *Lady Margaret* and the *Lady Evelyn*, which the Furness Railway Company runs between Barrow, Fleetwood, and Heysham; and I may also mention—though this is not exactly "sea-power"—the excellent Windermere fleet of the same company, consisting of five steam-yachts and a steam-barge, and the steam-gondola which it runs on Coniston Lake. The Furness and Midland companies are also joint owners of four steamers plying between Barrow and Belfast, and Barrow and the Isle of Man.

It is impossible to put into figures the value of the property constituting the sea-power of our railway companies, as the authorities generally do not make any separate returns of the capital they have invested in docks, harbours, steamboats, etc. A separate return is made to the Board of Trade of the revenue which the companies derive from this branch of their business; but the figures under this head include receipts from canals as well as from steamships, harbours, and docks. The total revenue of the railway companies from these four sources for the year 1903 was £4,005,923, which, if capitalised at 4 per cent., would represent an investment of about £100,000,000, or something like one-tenth of the paid-up "railway" capital of the United Kingdom. Probably the total sum sunk by the companies in provision for carrying traffic by water is considerably larger than £100,000,000,

DISCHARGING WOOD-PULP AT PENARTH DOCK, TAFF VALE RAILWAY COMPANY.
At this and other railway docks, wagons are loaded and discharged immediately alongside the vessels.



THE FOUR MOVABLE HYDRAULIC COAL-TIPS AT PENARTH DOCK, TAFF VALE RAILWAY COMPANY.
These tips will load up a vessel with coal more quickly than any other machinery in the world.

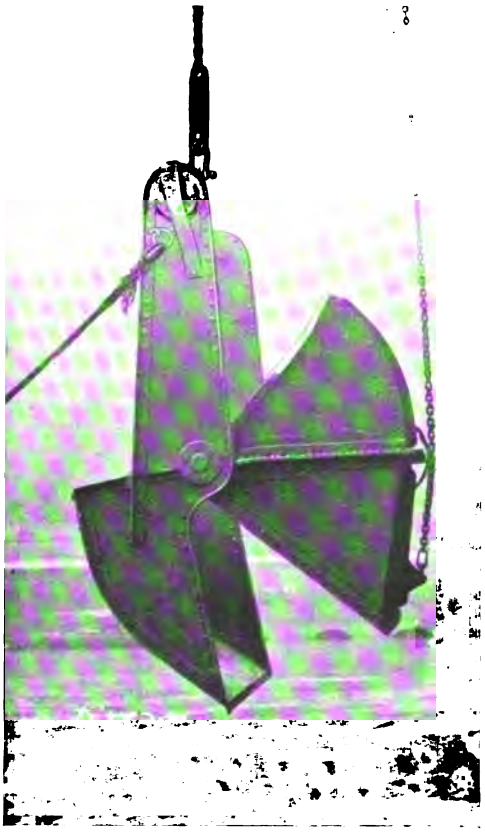
as it is not likely that these undertakings, on the average, earn as much as 4 per cent. Indeed, it is generally supposed that the dock, harbour, shipping, and canal properties of our railway companies are not, as a rule, directly remunerative properties, but are undertaken as "feeders" to the railway systems proper. Some of them probably pay very well, while others may be carried on at an actual loss, which is made up for by the receipts derived from the over-sea traffic carried on the railways.

A recent writer on "Ports and Docks," Mr. Douglas Owen, who has made a special study of his subject both in this country and abroad, has pointed out that the Continental system of State-assisted docks, and the British system of railway ownership, lead to very much the same results. The docks at Hamburg, Antwerp, and other great Continental ports—keen rivals with our own—are run by the State or municipalities, singly or jointly, and are very probably run at a loss. "But what does it matter," the citizens of these towns and States argue, "whether we make a profit on the docks or not? The object of docks is to bring trade to the country, and we make our profit on the trade." It would be exceedingly difficult for us in England to compete with ports designed and worked on a plan of such wise and magnificent liberality, were it not for our system of railway ownership. "For what does it matter," say the railway directors, "whether we make a profit on our docks or not? Their object is to feed our railway. They bring traffic to our metals, loads to our rolling-stock. We can afford not to make anything, or even to lose on our docks, because of what they bring to our railway system."

There are, of course, dock systems in this country which are both self-supporting and progressive. The great ports of Liverpool and Glasgow, for example, are each administered by a locally appointed trust on a perfectly independent and comfortable financial basis. But a port, to be successful "on its own," must have a very large population and a highly prosperous commercial community close at its back, as in the cases of the Mersey and the Clyde. When, as in the case of Southampton, or Bristol, or Hull, the main part of the trade done is with comparatively distant markets, the locality itself is not strong enough to keep the facilities of the port abreast of the demands of the times and the competition of rivals. In the history of our ports, Bristol, with its Corporation ownership of the docks, affords an instance of neglected opportunities. Southampton and Hull, with railway ownership of the docks, afford equally striking object-lessons in progressive develop-

ment. At Southampton the London and South-Western Railway Company, and at Hull the North-Eastern, came to the rescue of dock companies which were struggling in vain to keep their trade and had no power to develop it.

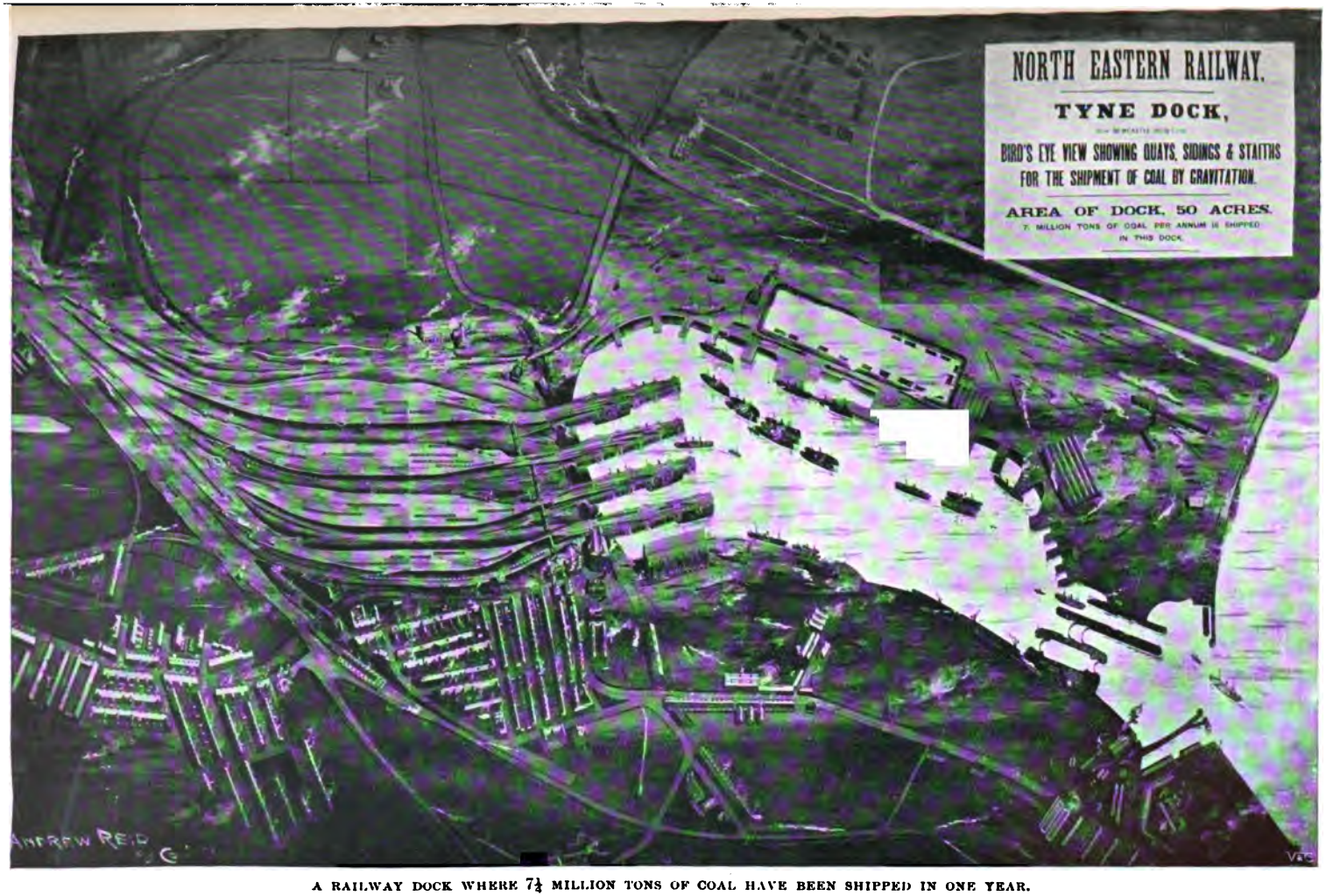
As regards extent, equipment, and capacity for business, the Southampton Docks of 1905 present a most impressive contrast to the same undertaking in 1892, on November 1st of which year they were taken over



THE ANTI-BREAKAGE BOX USED IN SHIPPING COAL AT PENARTH DOCK.

by the London and South-Western Railway Company. The dock company had no hydraulic cranes, no electric light for night working, a very inadequate system of quayside rails, insufficient shed accommodation, and only one dry-dock large enough to accommodate a modern liner. With the best available crane-power and lighting, twenty-five miles of dock railway and twelve locomotives, new warehouses for grain and wood, double-storey sheds on the quays, a new coal-barge dock, its own dredging-plant, two new graving-docks—amongst the largest in the world—several thousand feet of new deep-water quayage, the finest cold storage and lairage installation in Europe, and many minor improvements, the present Southampton Dock estate has little in common with the moribund and decrepit concern taken over by the London and South-Western Railway Company only twelve years ago. The traffic has increased to a corresponding degree—the goods traffic by about 90 per cent., the coal traffic by over 100 per cent., and the passenger traffic by 70 per cent. Unless the work had been done by the State, it is impossible to suggest how the money necessary to raise the port to its present excellence of equipment could have been found; and railway ownership has the inestimable advantage over State ownership that it carries with it commercial management. The South-Western Railway Company, whilst it can afford to be generous in its expenditure on the docks, has to earn a dividend on its undertaking as a whole, and this necessity is the best possible check upon extravagance or waste.

A factor which might not improbably have compelled the Government to lend a hand in the development of Southampton, had not the London and South-Western Railway Company been well able to do the work unaided, is the supreme importance of the port as a place for the embarkation and disembarkation of troops, owing to its proximity to the great military centres. This point was put in the forefront when the docks were originally constructed, but no one anticipated that either port or railway would be subjected to such a strain as in the early months of the South African war. The work then accomplished by the London and South-Western Company is still fresh in our memories, and it is no exaggeration to say that it materially helped to save the Empire from the terrible calamity of the overrunning of Natal by the Boers. It is not so generally known that during the recent joint naval and military manœuvres arrangements were made between the Government and the railway company to test the capabilities of Southampton in an even more striking way. The great feature of the port as it now exists is that in addition to possessing one of the finest "open" deep-water docks in the world, it has an unusually large extent of ocean quayage, also accessible in perfect shelter at any state of the tide, to which additions are constantly being made by the reclamation of "the Mudlands." In con-



A RAILWAY DOCK WHERE 7¼ MILLION TONS OF COAL HAVE BEEN SHIPPED IN ONE YEAR.

This is a photograph of an isometrical plan sent by the North-Eastern Railway Company to the St. Louis Exhibition.

nection with the joint military and naval expedition, no less than ten transports of 90,000 tons gross were simultaneously berthed in the Empress Dock and along the ocean quays on September 5th last, and the test above referred to consisted in loading these in the shortest possible time with the men and *matériel* composing the expedition.

The force to be embarked consisted of 12,000 officers and men, 2,900 horses, 61 guns, 315 transport, engineer, and ambulance wagons, and 55 landing-boats, all of which had to be embarked over the quays, except the boats, which were towed alongside and taken on board by the ships' gear. The work commenced at 7 a.m., and by 3 p.m. nine out of the ten transports had finished loading and got away, the other one being detained until 5 p.m. by a breakdown of its steering-gear. The disembarkation test, which took place on September 16th, was even more successful. All ten transports returned simultaneously, commencing at 9 a.m., and in an hour they had all been berthed. 9,000 of the troops were entrained at the docks immediately on disembarkation, together with a number of horses, and the remainder marched away with the cavalry, guns, wagons, etc. The whole expedition was clear of the docks by 3 p.m.—*i.e.*, six hours after the arrival of the first ship.

H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, who was present with this expedition, personally expressed to Mr. Williams, the London and South-Western Railway Company's superintendent at Southampton Docks, his appreciation of the arrangements and facilities by which the remarkable celerity above mentioned was attained, thereby enforcing the similar opinion expressed by Lord Kitchener on his return from the South African war as to the very useful part Southampton and the South-Western Railway had played in that conflict. In this instance and in others, "the sea-power of our railways" is an important part of the fighting strength of the country.

In the food supply of our people the docks provided by our railway companies play a very important part. The London and South-Western, by virtue of its position as dock-owner as well as railway-owner, is able to work the import traffic of Southampton with the greatest possible economy in the matter of handling and loading, and it can thus give exceptionally low rates on shipments for the London market. Similarly the Great Eastern, in its capacity as owner of a fleet of steamships trading with the Continent, can carry Dutch, Danish, and other imports through

FITTING A BOILER INTO A VESSEL AT SILLOTH DOCK, NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY COMPANY.

A 25-ton steam-crane is employed.

Harwich with a despatch and at a price which would not be possible were the means of sea and land carriage in separate hands. So long as it is the policy of this country that the masses of the population should be dependent on foreign sources for the supply of most of the necessaries of life, so long will the sea-power of our railway companies continue to expand in the direction of opening out more and more distant fields of supply; and we have fresh evidence of this at the present time in the plans now being laid by the Lancashire and Yorkshire and North-Eastern companies for running steamers between Hull and Goole and Continental ports. At the same time, of course, the export traffic of the British Isles is facilitated, as the vessels require back cargoes; and whatever is done by the railway companies in the direction of cheapening freight on exports assists the British trader to scale the tariff walls of the Continent and the United States.

The immense cold storage and lairage premises recently erected by the London and South-Western Railway Company on the open quays at Southampton Docks, and leased by it to the International Cold Storage and

Lairage Company, Limited, are eloquent of the importance of Southampton as a food port. The cold store is the largest in Europe. It consists of five floors containing fifty-six rooms, and has a total storage capacity of 2,000,000 cubic feet. 4,800 quarters of beef and 155,000 carcasses of sheep can be accommodated at one time, and there will still be 1,300,000 cubic feet available for miscellaneous goods, such as butter, fish, game, poultry, eggs, fruit, etc. In the slaughter-houses and lairages 600 head of cattle can be killed and dealt with per diem, and there are ample means of increasing this accommodation when required. The grain warehouses at Southampton and other ports are also very interesting, possessing as they do automatic machinery for taking corn out of the hold of a ship and depositing it at any required spot in a series of huge warehouses, where men are kept busy at the opening of each spout levelling down the heap of grain which pours out in an everflowing stream. The casual stroller on the quays alongside these grain warehouses is surprised to learn that under his feet this stream of grain is passing, and it is a fascinating pastime to watch the corn being poured through a funnel apparently into the interior of the quay, and then to follow its course from place to place till it comes to rest on its allotted floor in the great series of stores. These are but samples of the extensive facilities of various kinds which railway companies, in the capacity of dock-owners, find it necessary to provide for the reception and handling of import traffic. The provision of graving-docks for repairing ships is also an expensive necessity which railway dock-owners have to supply. The new graving-dock just completed at Southampton is no less than 871 feet long.

Under the head of exports the most important commodity dealt with at railway docks is coal. As already stated, the Taff Vale, Barry, Cardiff, and Rhymney railways of South Wales were primarily built for the development of the most important steam-coal district in the world, the output of which is about 35,000,000 tons yearly. The greater part of this huge output is carried down by these railway companies to the coast, to be shipped at the docks which they have provided for the purpose. At Barry Dock no less than 8,810,127 tons of coal were exported in 1903, and the figures for Penarth and Cardiff (Bute) Docks are also very large, the shipments at Penarth (about four million tons annually) being probably larger in ratio to area than at any other dock in the world. It is claimed that the most efficient machinery in the world for the shipment of coal quickly, so as to secure despatch in the loading and departure of a vessel, is possessed by the Taff Vale Railway Company at Penarth Dock, near Cardiff. The plant referred to consists of four movable hydraulic tips, which run on rails like travelling cranes, so that they can all be brought to bear on a vessel at the same time. The loaded wagon of coal, the standard capacity of which is ten tons, runs

SHIPPING THE L. AND N. W. R. LOCOMOTIVE "QUEEN EMPRESS," AT LIVERPOOL, FOR THE CHICAGO EXHIBITION, FEBRUARY 1, 1893.

down by gravity when the hand-brake is released, from an adjacent siding on to the cradle of the tip, and it is immediately raised by hydraulic power to a maximum height of forty-five feet above the quay level. It is then tipped, the pin holding the door at the lower end is removed, and the contents descend through a shoot in the direction of the ship's hold. The South Wales steam coal, however, is very fragile, and to give it a drop of forty-five feet would damage it seriously. Accordingly a most ingenious intermediary, in the form of an "anti-breakage box," has been devised, which is lowered down by a crane to receive the coal at the foot of the shoot, and in which the coal is further lowered until it is in close proximity to the hold of the vessel. This box is made in two parts, so arranged that it opens automatically by the tightening of a chain at a certain stage in the operation of lowering, and closes automatically when raised. The use of the box can be dispensed with after part of the cargo has been loaded, as the heap of coal rising in the hold itself serves to break the force of the fall from the shoot.

When the four movable tips at Penarth are concentrated upon a single vessel, four ten-ton coal wagons can, in the space of thirty seconds, be lifted from the quay, their contents tipped into the shoot, and the empty wagons brought back to quay level. But the operations of feeding the cradle with wagons from the siding on the quay, and boxing and trimming the coal as it falls from the shoot, make it impossible to ship a whole cargo at the maximum speed of the tips themselves. The results obtained are, nevertheless, very remarkable. On one occasion a vessel took in 2,333 tons in one hour fifty-five minutes, 1,430 tons being shipped in the first hour, or at the rate of nearly twenty-four tons a minute. At other parts of the dock, where the conditions allow high-level tips to be used, and it is not necessary to raise the wagons by hydraulic power before tipping them, an even greater amount of work can be done per tip, one record being thirty-nine wagons in the hour, or one every twenty-three seconds at the same tip. But high-level tips are necessarily fixed; the advantage of the low-level ones is that they are movable, and the whole four at Penarth can be concentrated on to a single vessel.

The coal shipped at Tyne Dock and other East Coast ports is not so fragile as the South Wales product, and the shipping is usually done with hopper-wagons which are run on to staiths or jetties built out into the dock, with four or five loading-spouts on either side of them. The contents of the wagons are then discharged through hopper-bottoms into the spout, instead of from an end door as at Cardiff. At the Tyne Dock of the North-Eastern Railway Company the striking feature is the complete use made of gravitation for the moving of the wagons on and off the staiths. The wagons are brought from the various collieries by locomotives to the nest of sidings provided for each jetty, from whence they are run on to the jetty by gravitation, and having delivered their load at one of the spouts, they run off the jetty, still by gravity, to the empty wagon standage, on a lower level. The spouts are laid at an angle of fifty degrees, and are constructed in such a way that a ship can be loaded at four different levels, and into two hatches at the same time. The speed at which coals can be loaded is only limited by the trimming in the ship's hold. In addition to shipping seven million tons of coal annually at Tyne Dock, the North-Eastern loads up about three million tons yearly at its Blyth staiths, and about two million tons at Dunston-on-Tyne. The London and North-Western has some very efficient coal-shipping machinery at its Garston Dock, near Liverpool, as also have both the Caledonian and the North British at their various ports. At the new Grangemouth Dock of the Caledonian Railway Company on the Firth of Forth hydraulic hoists for coal shipment are now being erected capable of lifting wagons of a gross weight of thirty-two tons. This will enable trucks of a capacity of at least twenty tons to be dealt with. The limitations of the dock machinery at the various ports have hitherto been an obstacle in the way of the conveyance of export coal in large-capacity wagons, but the North-Eastern can deal with twenty-ton wagons at Blyth, and the Caledonian is now following suit at Grangemouth. The North-Eastern is now erecting a new dock and a new coal-shipping staith at Hartlepool, and the Cardiff Railway Company has almost completed a new "Bute" dock at Cardiff. The improvements now being carried out at Grangemouth, Hartlepool, Cardiff, and other ports, together with the new dock works about to be started by railway companies at Hull, Grimsby, and elsewhere, emphasise the advantage to our shipping and to trade generally of having the long purses of the railways to draw upon so as to meet the constant need for enlargement of accommodation due to the continual expansion of the size of ships.

AN HONOURABLE ESTATE.

By HAROLD WHITE.*

"YER know," said Mr. Frederick Cook to his wife confidentially, as he watched her laboriously clearing away the supper-things, "I was never meant for this 'ere."

"Do you mean sittin' about and doin' nothin'?" inquired his wife, with a sniff.

Mr. Cook settled himself with dignity.

"No, I mean—this 'ere," he replied, with an explanatory wave of his pipe round his surroundings. "Do you know what they call me round at our place?"

"Oh, I don't know," said his wife irritably, for she had had a hard day and was tired of it.

"They call me Gentleman Freddie. I suppose it's sort of ways I 'ave," pursued Mr. Cook, mentally surveying himself with almost pathetic satisfaction.

"M'mph," commented his wife.

"I can't 'elp bein' free-'anded and that. When I'm with pals, I don't think of money. I'm above it."

Considering that Mrs. Cook had had to give up her girl, and the floors were "getting on her back," as she expressed it, she may be pardoned for greeting this remark with an indignant snort. But Mr. Cook was lost in the rapturous contemplation of his own personality.

"I dessay I might 'ave married a lady," he said contemplatively.

"You!" said Mrs. Cook.

Mr. Cook defended himself. One of old Price's daughters, who had become a governess—"nursery," interpolated Mrs. Cook—had been over and above willing to have him. She was nearly a lady, and so quite a lady might, according to the doctrine of chances, have fallen to his charms. Mr. Cook argued seriously and with some heat, and the conversation became highly acrimonious, till finally Mrs. Cook went off to bed with bitterness in her heart.

It is probable that next morning Mr. Cook forgot all about it, his attention being fixed upon breakfast; but Mrs. Cook did not. She answered nothing to Mr. Cook's scathing condemnation of his bloater, but silently matured her plans.

The commerce of his country demanded Mr. Cook's attention till six. Then he had his journey, and conviviality claimed half an hour at the public-house opposite the station, so that it was a quarter past seven before he appeared on his threshold, to meet there Mrs. Gammle and Mrs. Brunt, his neighbours, engaged, as usual, in emphatic conversation.

"Missis in?" asked Mr. Cook rather irritably.

There was something curious in their manner of assenting that stopped Mr. Cook. As a rule, he did not approve of them. They gossiped and kept Mrs. Cook from her household duties. To-day, however, each wore an indefinable air of importance and defiance combined.

"She's upstairs, dressin'," said Mrs. Gammle.

"Upstairs, dressin'. Then where's my tea?" demanded Mr. Cook.

Mrs. Gammle and Mrs. Brunt exchanged looks.

"He hasn't heard," said Mrs. Brunt mysteriously.

"What?" said Mr. Cook.

"Mrs. Cook's discovered something. She's an Honourable."

"A what?"

"An Honourable—the daughter of a lord."

"Was old Poulter a lord?" asked Cook in blank amazement.

"He could 'a' bin, only he didn't take it up. He could have been the present Lord Poulteney, only he's dead."

"Well, I'm hanged! Who said so?" asked Mr. Cook, who faintly remembered the late Mr. Poulter. "Who told you so?"

"My son, that's at Cohen and Cohen's. He come home early to-day and started off for his holiday," volunteered Mrs. Brunt.

Mr. Cook stayed to hear no more, but rushed into the house in wild bewilderment.

There was no tea apparent, but a hired handmaiden was brushing dust up from the floor on to the tea-cloth, and Mrs. Cook was superintending operations, with an air of

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great languor, from her husband's favourite armchair.

On her head was a confection of feathers somewhat suggestive of a savage head-piece, and she wore what she was rather pathetically accustomed to describe as her "jewellery."

"'They call me Gentleman Freddie.'"

"What's all this?" demanded Mr. Cook faintly.

"In one moment, Frederick," replied Mrs. Cook, in an unaccustomed voice. "Pay the girl. It'll be one-and-nine."

Mr. Cook was too far off his balance to object, and did what was required of him.

"What's all this about your being an Honourable?" he asked again huskily, as the girl left the room after an elaborate curtsy to Mrs. Cook, which she acknowledged with a regal wave of the hand.

"It appears," said Mrs. Cook, in the high-pitched tones of social grandeur, "so I am informed by Mrs. Brunt's son, that I am the daughter of a lord."

"Old Poulter!" gasped Cook incredulously.

"It's been long known at Cohen and Cohen's. It's no breach of confidence, he says. He asked for me at the door as the Honourable Mrs. Cook."

"And what am I?" asked Mr. Cook.

"You? You're nothing. It doesn't affect you."

"Oh!" said Mr. Cook in a very disappointed tone, "then I'm only a plain gentleman."

His wife paused for a minute.

"Yes. You know where the tea-things are. I shouldn't mind a slice or two of ham. As the girl's gone, you might step round and get half a pound."

Mr. Cook paused irresolutely. Then he caught the Honourable Mrs. Cook's mixed glance of dignity and condescension, and walked forth almost with diffidence.

On his return he had the opportunity of discovering that making a fire up is back-aching work, and that fetching out plates and bread-and-butter and the rest of the paraphernalia was enough to put a man off his meals for the remainder of his life.

"This clattering will really give me a headache," observed Mrs. Cook, as she

"They gossiped and kept Mrs. Cook from her household duties."

watched his operations with raised eyebrows.

Being very hot and tired, Mr. Cook was about to give a hasty answer, but an indefinable something in his wife's air stopped his usual ready flow.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he muttered under his breath, as he actually found himself offering his wife tea before taking it himself.

The conversation during the meal was not genial, Mrs. Cook confining herself to

"Making a fire up is back-aching work."

a few frigid observations concerning the cleanliness of Mr. Cook's hands, the state of his hair, and his manner of eating; while Mr. Cook, seated with a blank expression on the edge of his chair, seemed incapable of anything but *sotto voce* objurgations.

When it was finished, Mr. Cook almost unconsciously began to fill a pipe, for such was his cheerful habit.

"Kindly wait until I have gone to bed," said his wife, raising her eyebrows as though at a social solecism almost inconceivable to her.

For one moment Mr. Cook's thumb hesitated on his pipe-bowl; then the glance told, and he furtively slipped it, unlit, into his pocket. During the remainder of the evening he was required to read extracts from the social paragraphs of the evening paper, while his wife remarked on and corrected his methods of pronunciation. When at last she arose, he found himself standing up and holding open the door for her, while she explained how he should wash up that night and get breakfast for himself the following morning.

It is unpleasant to be aroused from heavy sleep in order to turn out into a chilly dawn and grope among sharp and dusty cinders, especially when the someone who has aroused you merely turns over to have another refreshing snooze; but Mr. Cook was supported by an inward sense of reflected glory which made him bear with these things. He felt that he could comport himself in the City as the equal of any man; which he did, sublimely unconscious that he was thereby making himself exceedingly unpopular. When he arrived home, Mrs. Gammle and Mrs. Brunt emerged from his house, having, as they said, spent the afternoon with the Honourable Mrs. Cook; and, in spite of his aversion to those ladies, Mr. Cook felt a distinct glow and walked in, braced to spend a precisely similar evening to the one preceding.

The discomforts and rebukes were, he felt, quite compensated for when he was able to tell the butcher, to whom he had been sent for a couple of kidneys, that they were to be particular fresh, as they were for the Honourable Mrs. Cook. The butcher's incredulous stare was balm to Mr. Cook's soul; and when he got in, he washed his hands twice without a murmur.

After a couple of days, of course, it became a little tiring, and Mr. Cook found that living up to his wife's position was a considerable drain on his resources, quite putting a stop to the genial half-hour at the "Railway Arms." A brilliant idea had struck him. Wasn't there anything in the shape of cash to be had with what he was pleased to call the title? Mrs. Cook, however, was quite clear on the point. It was particularly mentioned that the estates had gone to the other branch. It was only the honour.

Mr. Cook gave a little sigh. Still, there the honour was, and it helped him wash up the tea-things that night. It also supported him during the following days to do most of the housework, pay the extra help, and take any messages of a polite nature which Mrs. Cook wished to send to Mrs. Gammle. It cannot be denied, however, that Mr. Cook,

whose physique was not of a very robust kind, began to be exceedingly worn out, and, uplifted though he was by a sense of social eminence, his spirit began to get bitter within him.

Whether it was because his air of superiority made him obnoxious, or whether it was due to his inability to stand his companions the usual proportion of drinks, it became evident to him that instead of being more popular and sought after than before, he found himself either ignored or else treated with effusive and contemptuous pleasantries.

"Are you an' the missis going to the Court ball, Alf?" one would say to another in his hearing.

"No, but I'm just goin' to look in at the 'levy' to see my friend the Prince," Alf would reply.

"My wife says she's sorry she trod on your wife's Court train the other night. She was jest arskin' the Earl of 'Arringay 'ow 'is divorce was gettin' on." And so on; and none of them could be induced to believe that Cook's wife really was the Honourable Mrs. Cook, and treated the statement with a derision that nearly drove him rampant with rage.

At last, one evening he descended from the train seething with indignation over a conversation of the usual kind which had

"Just returned from his holiday."

been bandied about the carriage, when he observed before him young Brunt, with his Gladstone bag, evidently just returned from his holiday. He followed him till, with what he had once called the "old crowd," he disappeared into the "Railway Arms."

"Now for justification," thought Mr. Cook, and strolled in after him.

"What O! Without there!" said a wit. "Way for the Earl!"

"'Er Ladyship sent you round for the supper beer?" inquired another; but Mr. Cook, without regarding them, went straight for young Brunt.

"Look 'ere, Brunt," he said, "you can settle this once for all."

"What?" asked Mr. Brunt with some amazement.

"Is my wife the Honourable Mrs. Cook, or isn't she?" demanded

"'Are you an' the missis going to the Court ball, Alf?'"

Mr. Cook, with a look of defiance round the bar.

Mr. Brunt caught the general air of derision.

"Oh, yes; and the Queen Dowager of the Cannibal Islands," he said.

"Didn't you come and say that you knew, from Cohen and Cohen's, that she was the daughter of a lord?" asked Mr. Cook, with a certain anxiety, as he watched young Brunt's face.

"I may 'ave," said Brunt; "but if I did, I was talkin' in my sleep."

"Didn't you——" began Mr. Cook rather blankly.

"No, I blame well didn't," said young Brunt. "'Ere, landlord, put 'im on the Black List."

Mr. Cook looked and saw nothing but scornful denial on young Brunt's face, and an exact replica of that expression on everyone else's; and, as the laughter developed into a roar, crushed his hat down on to his head and rushed off home, to say the many things that were in his mind.

As he opened the door, he saw a bright, clear fire, the room which his wearied efforts had left ill-kempt, all swept and garnished, and the table cleanly clothed, with the tea-things standing invitingly upon it. His armchair was unoccupied, and his wife, her confection of feathers removed, and now no longer fearfully clothed in her best, but neatly gowned and aproned, was removing something very savoury from the hob.

Now, Mr. Cook had opened his mouth to say something, but what that something was must of necessity remain unrecorded, for it was never uttered. It may have been a grateful thanksgiving that his wife had turned out to be not a lady, after all. At all events, he said nothing. By those who are privileged to overhear Mrs. Cook converse with Mrs. Gammle—and for those in the near neighbourhood that privilege is not difficult to gain—it is gathered that he has not said much ever since.

He is no longer known among his former associates as Gentleman Freddie; but when they wish to address him, they call him the Honourable, a name he cordially detests.

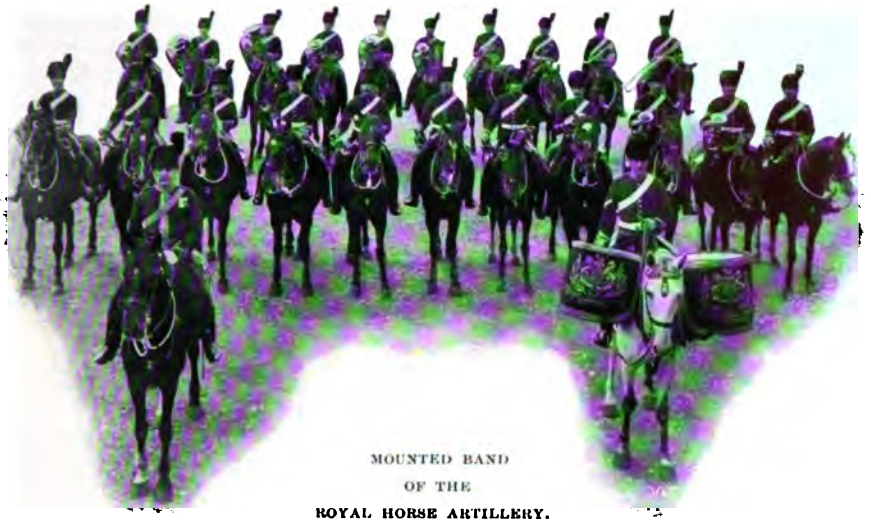
ALL ADOWN TO DEVON.

ALL adown to Devon, lass, the lanes lie long and deep,
Cool cradles of the moor-streams, to soothe a soul to sleep;
The foxglove bells on the ripples float, the white hedge-roses wait,
And the king-fern bids you enter at his gate.

All across the moorland, maid, the wind blows sweet and wild,
To bring you back the heart of grace, the faith of a little child;
Held close in mothering fern-arms, your tear-stains washed once more,
In the rain-filled granite font beneath the Tor.

All adown to Devon, lass, the lanes lie hushed and deep,
Dusk cradle of the wild flow'rs, to lull a soul to sleep.
When lights grow rowan-red, dear heart, above the rosy loam,
And the music of the sheep-bells rings you home!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.



MOUNTED BAND
OF THE
ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY.

MILITARY BANDS.

By HORACE WYNDHAM.

Photographs by Argent Archer, Kensington, W.

THE big drum is undoubtedly the best recruiting-agent that the British Army possesses. Without its adventitious aid even the celebrated "Free Kit" placard would have but little effect in enrolling candidates for military glory. Shakespeare pays a tribute to the efficacy of martial music when in "Othello" he refers to

> The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife . . . .
> Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

and countless other writers, both before and after him, have followed suit.

Warrant for the employment of music in the hour of battle may be found repeatedly in the Scriptures. Both Moses and Joshua had a firm belief in the value of trumpets as a means of encouraging their hosts, while the use of cornets and cymbals for the same purpose is also mentioned in the Old Testament. The Spartans, too, employed them freely when waging war against the Messenians, as did the Romans long before the days of Julius Cæsar. Coming down to comparatively recent times, we find Bartholomæus remarking: "A trompe is properly an instrument ordeyned for men that fyghteth in batayle, to crye and to warne of the synes of batayle. . . . Men in olden tyme used trompes in batayle to fere and affraye theyr enymes and to comforte theyre owne knyghts and fyghtynge men."

Nowadays we adopt other means for securing these results, and — in European armies, at any rate—bands no longer go into action with their instruments. Nor are colours ever seen during the progress of a modern campaign, despite the heroic deeds that centre around them according to lady "military" novelists. As a rule, the musicians are left behind altogether when a regiment takes the field. Should they accompany it, however, they do so in the capacity of ammunition-carriers and stretcher-bearers. It is only on the stage that British troops meet their country's foes in battle with flags flying and bands playing martial airs.

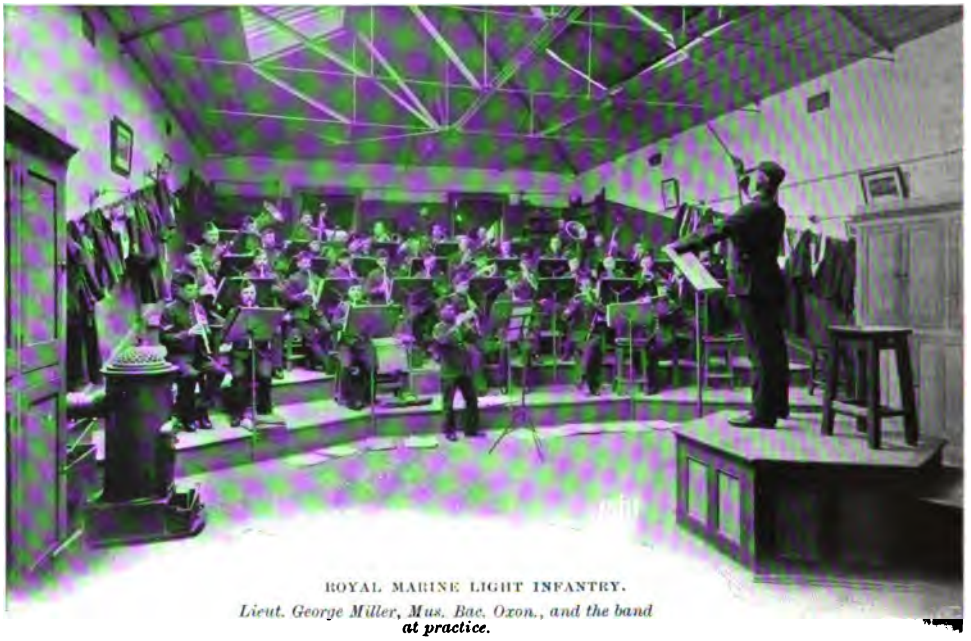
It was not until England had possessed the luxury of a standing army for some time that the employment of military instrumentalists was officially recognised. At first only a few "crack" corps maintained musicians. In course of time, however, the practice spread, and at length every regiment had its own band. The members of these were at first almost invariably recruited from abroad, as were also the bandmasters. These

individuals as a rule were Germans, as Englishmen qualified for the position could not be obtained in sufficient numbers. In evidence of this it is interesting to note that towards the end of the seventeenth century the officers of the Royal Artillery caused the following advertisement to be inserted in the *Daily Advertiser*:—

"WANTED immediately, a Person qualified as a Master Musician to a Military Band of Music, who is a perfect Master of the French Horn, and performs on other Wind Instruments, as Great encouragement will be given. None need apply who is not a Perfect Master and can be well recommended as a Person of great sobriety and good character."

In due time a "perfect master," whose reputation for sobriety and professional skill stood the necessary tests, came forward and was appointed to the position. This was one Herr Georg Kühler, subsequently Anglicised into Mr. George Kealer.

An interesting point in connection with the early military bands is that negroes were largely employed to play the big drum, cymbals, and triangle. In the Guards their services were retained up to the outbreak of the Crimean War, but in other regiments they were dispensed with when the late Queen Victoria came to the throne. Judging from old pictures, these blackamoors must have presented a most imposing appearance, for, in addition to being men of great stature, they wore marvellous costumes, consisting of gorgeously embroidered tunics, baggy trousers, and turbans plentifully adorned with feathers and tassels. The ordinary bandsmen, too, were often dressed in an extremely eccentric fashion, corps vieing with one another in this respect. From a description of their uniform at the beginning of the last century it seems that the Artillery must have carried off the palm for splendour of attire. Thus, the men wore "coatees" of white cloth, with blue facings and edgings of red and blue, and epaulettes on the shoulders. Blue trousers with stripes, and shakoes ornamented with a brass plate, a tall scarlet feather, and scales and cords completed the costume. The only people to approach these fine fellows were the Guards drum-majors.



ROYAL MARINE LIGHT INFANTRY.
Lieut. George Miller, Mus. Bac. Oxon., and the band at practice.

The War Office never seems to have been particularly friendly towards bands, and for a long time, indeed, they strenuously resisted their formation at all. Military musicians, however, had come to stay, and their existence had to be acknowledged. This was done somewhat grudgingly at first, and the bands had a good deal to contend against. For example, the establishment was kept down to one man for each troop or company,

1ST LIFE GUARDS, ALBANY BARRACKS: FULL BAND IN STATE CLOTHING.

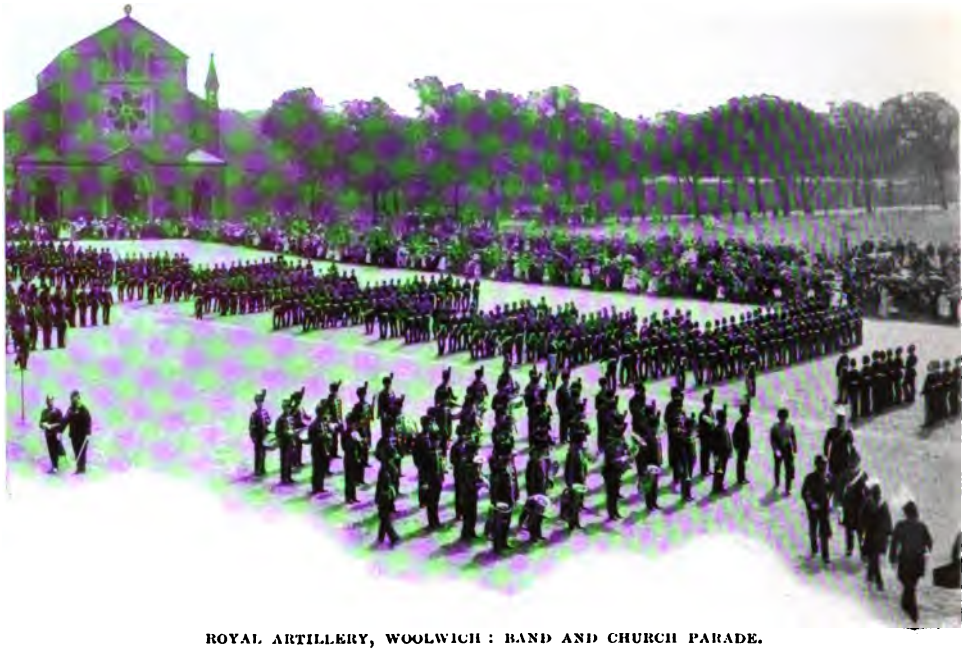
and the expense of providing instruments and music had to be met entirely by the officers. Of course, this gave some regiments a great advantage over others, and certain ones in which money was no object spent large sums in obtaining first-class conductors and sets of instruments by the best makers. The 2nd Life Guards, for example, imported on their own account a number of chromatic trumpets (at the time quite an orchestral novelty) from Russia.

Other curious instruments formerly used by military bands (but now discontinued) were the "jingling johnnie" and the "serpent." The former consisted of an arrangement of small bells set in a steel framework. The latter was a large wooden instrument, curved in form, with a bone mouthpiece, and capable, in the hands of an unskilled performer, of giving forth the most weird sounds. A story is told of Handel, who, on one occasion, when conducting an English orchestra, heard a mournful screech suddenly emitted. "Vat was that?" he demanded, laying down his bâton. "The serpent, sir," answered the player contritely. "Ach! say you so?" was the reply. "Vell, it vas not de serpent dat did beguile Eve!"

Considerable impetus was given to Army bands by the establishment, in March, 1857, of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall. A staff of professors was engaged (among the first of whom was the father of the late Sir Arthur Sullivan), and pupils were sent there from all regiments in the service. Those who showed most promise were trained for the position of bandmaster, while others were retained for the purpose of increasing the musical knowledge they already possessed. This system is still followed, the inmates of the School being divided into two classes—(1) students and (2) pupils. The former are selected after examination from among the qualified bandsmen, while the latter are boys who show promise of developing into good performers. At present there are about 80 students and 120 pupils under instruction. These remain at the School for three years and eighteen months respectively.

The course of instruction at Kneller Hall for prospective bandmasters is a very thorough one. It embraces a practical knowledge of all instruments used in a military orchestra, as well as composition, harmony, counterpoint, and conducting, etc. While under tuition candidates are tested as to their progress by independent experts appointed by the War Office. Among the examiners for

6TH INNISKILLING DRAGOONS BAND, DUNKALD.



ROYAL ARTILLERY, WOOLWICH: BAND AND CHURCH PARADE.

this purpose is Sir Frederick Bridge. By the way, it is worth remarking here—as it may not be generally known — that the students give a public performance in the Kneller Hall grounds every Thursday afternoon during the summer months. No charge is made for admission to this.

The post of an Army bandmaster is a highly coveted one. It carries with it the rank of warrant-officer and pay at the rate of five shillings a day, plus an annual allowance of £70, with free quarters, rations, and uniform. The holder of such an appointment also has his income materially increased by the fees he draws for conducting at exhibitions, concerts, and race meetings, etc. In the case of such popular bands as those of the Guards, Engineers, Artillery, and Marines, the extra payments on this account represent a considerable sum in the course of the year. It is also worth noting that a military bandmaster may even aspire to a commission, no less than five of them at present ranking as second-lieutenants. The first to be thus honoured was the late Dan Godfrey, of the Grenadiers.

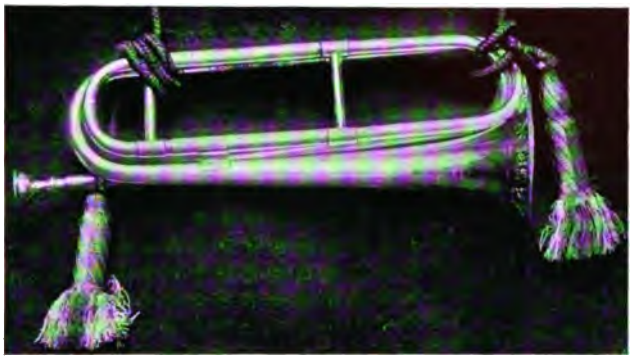
The Kneller Hall staff is commanded by Colonel Barrington Foote, while the director of music is Lieutenant Stretton, M.V.O. This latter officer was at one time a member of the Royal Artillery band. In addition to being an excellent all-round musician, he is also an accomplished violinist, having studied under the late J. T. Carrodus. Mr. Stretton's brother, by the way, is the director of the newly formed Royal Naval School of music at Portsmouth. In this gentleman's case rather a curious transition was effected, for, prior to receiving his appointment, he was bandmaster in the 1st Battalion, the York and Lancaster Regiment. He has thus served in both the Army and the Navy.

The authorised strength of a military band is twenty-one, and for this number instruments are officially provided. In practically every case, however, the regulation strength is considerably exceeded by the addition thereto of acting bandsmen. Without their aid, indeed, a first-class programme could not be performed. In the case of the Artillery, the number of musicians is ninety-three, while in the Guards bands it is sixty. The allotment of the different instruments is, where the Grenadiers are concerned, as follows: Eighteen B-flat clarionets, two E-flat clarionets, one E-flat alto clarionet, one bass clarionet, three bassoons, two oboes, two piccolos, two flutes, one tenor saxophone, one alto saxophone, six cornets, four French horns, two trumpets, two tenor trombones, two bass trombones, two baritones, two euphoniums, three E-flat basses, one B-flat bass, one bass drum, and two side-drums. The value of these amounts to a considerable sum. For example, a B-flat bass costs £25,

a bass clarionet £18 18*s*., and a bass drum £10 10*s*. It thus becomes quite easy to lay out several hundreds of pounds on a set of first-class instruments.

The members of the Guards bands and other favourite ones with the public earn a good deal of money by fulfilling "playing out" engagements when not required for military duty. A weekly fee of £400, for example, was paid on this account for the band of the Grenadiers at the recent Glasgow Exhibition. Other weekly fees that have been charged under similar circumstances are as follows: Coldstream Guards, £390; Scots Guards, £330; Irish Guards, £305; and Royal Marines, £275. Cavalry bands are, as a rule, cheaper than infantry ones. This is because their numerical strength is usually somewhat smaller. In the case of Highland regiments an extra charge is made when bagpipes are required. Very often it amounts to £50 a week.

For attendance at a race meeting or garden party the band of a Line regiment usually receives from £15 to £25. A portion of this goes towards the purchase of instruments, etc., while the remainder is divided among the performers in accordance with their rank and service, the lion's share going to the conductor. Soloists can also augment their receipts at times by reinforcing civilian orchestras.



THE WATERLOO BUGLE.

In connection with this practice rather an amusing episode once occurred. At a certain provincial festival the programme included Haydn's "Surprise Symphony." The committee, determining to do the thing in style,

ROYAL HORSE GUARDS: QUEEN'S TRUMPETERS IN STATE CLOTHING.

secured the leading artiste procurable for the drum part, cheerfully paying him a large fee for his services. To their consternation, however, they discovered when it came to a rehearsal that he merely had to play one note. This was bad enough, but worse was to follow. When the psychological moment arrived in the course of the performance, the specially engaged drummer actually forgot his part altogether, and thus gave the committee a much bigger "surprise" than they had bargained for.

BAND OF THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS.

Some of our military bands have travelled a good deal. This is the case to a marked degree with those of the Guards. That of the Coldstreams, for example, in addition to giving public performances all over the United Kingdom, has recently visited Canada, while that of the Grenadiers went to America in 1872 and again in 1904, when it played for three months at the St. Louis Exposition. By the way, in order to fulfil this engagement, a complete set of fresh instruments had to be obtained, as the ones ordinarily in use were of a different pitch from that obtaining in America. Mr. Rogan, the bandmaster of the Coldstreams, is graded as a second-lieutenant, as are also Mr. Somers, Mr. Miller, Mr. Wright, and Cavaliere Zavertal, the respective conductors of the bands of the Royal Engineers, Royal Marines (both divisions), and Royal Artillery. In this we are but following the example of other nations, for in Continental armies the bandmasters are almost invariably commissioned officers.

No British military band ranks higher in public estimation than does that of the Royal Artillery. With its fine series of concerts at the Albert Hall on Sunday afternoons Londoners have long been familiar, while frequent performances have also been given in all the large towns of the kingdom. Its high efficiency is due in great measure to Cavaliere Zavertal, M.V.O., its well-known leader. He received his appointment in 1881, being selected out of forty-four applicants.

According to Mr. H. G. Farmer, who has written an excellent history of this organisation, the nucleus of the Royal Artillery band was formed about the year 1762. At this date, however, it consisted only of eight men, the instruments being two trumpets, two horns, two bassoons, and four clarionets. Nowadays, as already mentioned, its strength is ninety-three. Some of the instruments in the band's possession are of historic interest. Among such are a side-drum presented by the Earl of Chatham in 1803, two 'cellos bequeathed by George IV. in 1831, and a pair of kettle-drums given by William IV. in 1833.

THE DRUMS, BLACK WATCH, ALDERSHOT.

A large number of people who have risen to distinction in the musical world have been connected either with the Royal Artillery or with its band. The late Sims Reeves, for example, was the son of a bombardier, and

THE BAND OF THE BLACK WATCH, ALDERSHOT.

as a child sang in the military choir at Woolwich ; and the father of the late Fred Leslie (for many years the principal comedian at the Gaiety Theatre) was a sergeant in the regiment. Finally, Mr. Charles Manners is the son of a colonel in the mounted branch. With regard to ladies, it may be mentioned that Miss Margaret Macintyre, the celebrated soprano, is the daughter of General Macintyre, R.A., and that Miss Ethel Smyth (whose opera "Der Wald" was heard at Covent Garden recently) is the daughter of General Smyth, R.A.

In cavalry bands a feature is always made of the kettle-drums. Some corps possess exceptionally fine instruments of this description. The Royal Horse Guards, for example, own a set which were presented by George III., and cost £1,500, and William IV. gave a pair to the 1st and 2nd Life Guards in 1831. The use of these instruments by cavalry is first mentioned in the reign of Henry VIII. During the Continental wars of the eighteenth century several sets belonging to French regiments were captured in action by the British troops. The 3rd and 7th Dragoon Guards, for example, distinguished themselves in this manner at Ramilies and Dettingen. Of the qualifications, other than musical ability, demanded of a kettle-drummer in the old days, it is remarked by Mallet that he "should be a man of heart, preferring rather to perish in the combat than to allow himself to be taken with his drums."

As may be imagined, the horses of a cavalry band have to be specially trained, for if they were to exhibit signs of restlessness on parade, the performances of their masters would scarcely be harmonious. That horses, however, can be taught to acquire an "ear for music" is proved by the remarkable precision with which musical rides are carried out by them. These exercises are always a favourite feature of the programme of the annual Military Tournament at Islington.

The connection of the famous Godfrey family with military bands is unique. The founder, Charles Godfrey, was born in 1790, and joined the Coldstream Guards as bassoon player two years before the battle of Waterloo. He was bandmaster of the regiments for nearly fifty years. His three sons, Daniel, Frederick, and Charles followed in his footsteps, and for many years conducted the bands of the Grenadiers, Coldstreams, and Royal Horse Guards.

THE POOR BOY'S BIRTHDAY.

OBSERVE, my child, this pretty scene,
And note the air of pleasure keen
With which the widow's orphan boy
Toots his tin horn, his only toy.
What need of costly gifts has he?
The widow has nowhere to flee,
And ample noise his horn emits
To drive the widow into fits.

MORAL.

The philosophic mind can see
The uses of adversity.

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER.

THE RICH BOY'S BIRTHDAY.

AND now behold this sulking boy.
His costly presents bring no joy;
Harsh tears of anger fill his eye,
Tho' he has all that wealth can buy.
What profits it that he employs
His many gifts to make a noise?
His play-room is so placed that he
Can cause his folks no agony.

MORAL.

Mere worldly wealth does not possess
The power of giving happiness.

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER.

IF YOUTH BUT KNEW.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

III.—THE BURGRAVE'S FAREWELL.

IT was a great folded sheet and bore, on a huge seal, a spreading coat-of-arms. It was addressed as follows: "To the High-born Steven Lee, Graf Waldorf zu Kilmansegg, at the Silver Stork Inn, Wellenshausen," and contained a brief but courteous message—

"Honoured Sir,

"I have just returned to my house and hear, with desolation, that I have missed the amiable visit which you have vouchsafed to it. Hoping that you may not yet have left the neighbourhood, I send this in haste. Will you not retrace your steps—if you think our poor hospitality still worth acceptance—and give me the exceeding gratification of calling myself your host?

"Charles Ludovic,

"Burgrave of Wellenshausen."

The young traveller, who had been looking back on his stolen visit to the castle on the peak, and on his evening with the ladies sheltered behind its forbidding walls, as an adventure of some spice (though, in its integrity, harmless enough), was seized with disappointment. So much for all latter-day romance; so much for the reputed Bluebeard of Wellenshausen; for the husband so ferociously jealous, report said, that he must shut up his Fatima in a tower as tight as St. Barbara's. Why, so far from striking off Fatima's head, he sends in haste to recall the audacious visitor and craves to be allowed to expend upon him the treasures of an amiable disposition.

"Ah, fiddler, my friend," thought Count Steven sagely, "you and your music have discoursed wild nonsense anent the surprises of life, anent the golden rose of youth . . . but the world is a workaday place, drab and dull of hue; and the dreams with which your words have filled my thoughts are but the children of my own fantasy and your own fiddle-bow."

He looked across the inn-yard, through a screen of vine-leaves, to where the fiddler was seated on a bench, playing away with a will, eyes beaming upon a ring of dancing children. The heaviness of the morning was clearing; yellow shafts of sunlight pierced the mists. Steven hesitated. The messenger from the Castle, a smart *Jäger* in a green-and-mulberry uniform, stood on one side with the decorous indifference of his condition, his lips pursed for a voiceless whistle to the tune that made gay the poor inn-yard. A little further away, the young nobleman's travelling-chaise was even now being packed under the supervision of his Lordship's body-servant . . . The Burgrave's invitation was banality itself, almost trivial; yet the programme for the day's journey was more everyday still.

* * * * *

The fiddler drew a long last note, and the children raised a shout of protest. A bell began to jangle, ugly and persistent.

"School-time!" cried the musician. He got up and nodded across to Steven. "Has my Lord Bluebeard invited you back upon his height?—Don't go."

"You, advise me not to go!" cried the other in amazement. He had had but two days' acquaintance with this crazy fellow, who, partly by the witchery of his music and partly by the air of mystery which surrounded him, partly again by some odd personal power, had fascinated him as no other human being had ever done before. This sober counsel, certes, was quite the last thing the young man had expected from lips that hitherto, upon every occasion, had suggested the out-of-the-way step, the fantastic resolve; urged them passionately, in the name of Youth and Opportunity.

* Copyright, 1904, by Egerton Castle, in the United States of America.

Of course that decided it. "Don't go," said the fiddler. Steven Lee, Count Kilmansegg, if Austrian by name, was half English by blood and more than half by education. And he was twenty-two; combativeness and obstinacy rose in arms. He had not been long his own master.

Inevitably he went.

He drove in state to the foot of the crag and, while his box and valise were loaded upon the mule that was to climb the rocky path to the feudal nest of granite, he paused to look down at the brown waters that rushed, so swift and dark, so cruelly cold, from unexplored caverns on the flanks of the mount. As he paused, he found that the travelling fiddler had overtaken him and was about to pass onwards along the high-road.

"We shall meet soon again, I trust, friend," he cried affably, and himself turned to ascend the path.

"Who can tell?" said the fiddler in a grave voice.

The young man glanced up at his destination, black and grim against a pale sky, and a chill came upon him like a sudden shadow.

* * * * *

The Burgrave was elderly, to have so young a wife; but he was a handsome man, square-built and portly. His manners were very fine—so fine, indeed, as to be confusing to his guest, straight from England and English reticence. The Burgrave smiled frequently, and joked, too, to a vast extent, with his wife and niece; but it was noticeable to Steven that the former seemed ill at ease, and that the latter now and again regarded her relation with an eye in which surprise and contempt were mingled.

Indeed, to the Count himself, his host's most boisterous laugh not unfrequently rang hollow; and, when they were alone together, it was not without some vague discomfort that he would find the Burgrave's gaze fixed upon him with a stoniness totally at variance with the bland expansion, the flattering expression which hovered upon his lips.

* * * * *

On the morning of the third day, Steven, invited to inspect the view from the battlements in an exceptionally clear light, found himself alone with Burgravine Betty on the topmost turret of the Burg. The Burgrave's great laugh was echoing up to them from the inner recesses of the winding stairs.

"O Heavens!" said the lady suddenly.

Steven turned. The cry was so tragic, apparently so unwarranted. The Burgravine's eyes were dry, but there was real terror on her pretty face.

"Why did you come?" she whispered. "In the name of mercy! was it not evident that it was a trap?"

"A trap!" he stammered.

"Yes, yes! O, do you not feel it? He is watching us like a cat—a cat going to spring; and I am the wretched mouse waiting—waiting. O, I can stand it no longer! I shall go mad. If only you had not come! How did he know? What did I tell him? There was nothing to tell, say you; we had done no harm. That is just it! I told him a lie, of course, and he found out it was a lie—that is of course, too. A man who has spies all about his place! And now he believes I am hiding something, and he is waiting only to be quite sure. O, sir, you might have known! A man who shuts up his wife for jealousy is not seized with such effusive hospitality towards handsome strangers without a reason of his own."

The warm olive had crept back to her face with the comfort of being able to speak at last. And for the life of her she could not have helped a flash of her blue eyes upon the final sentence.

"Then, madam," he cried—he was still bewildered, but there was a brooding something in the air that gave a truth to her words—"I will go now—to-day."

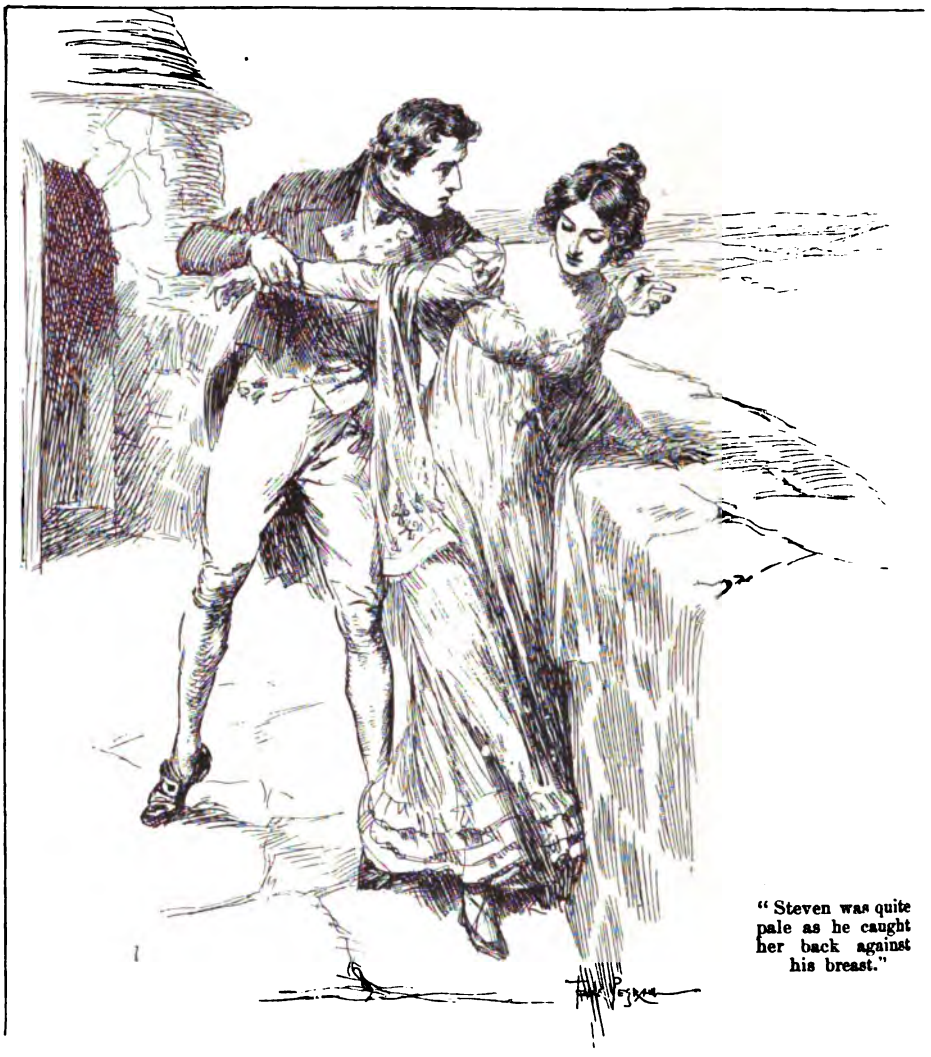
"Go?" she echoed in scorn. "Aye, go, if you can," she went on with a change of tone. "He has got you well in his meshes; you are clogged, sir, and bound by his politeness and his hospitality. And if you think he will let you go before he has carried out his purpose with us, you little know the Burgrave."

"Carried out his purpose with us!" The very vagueness of the suggestion added to its unpleasantness. Steven lifted his head indignantly. "And what may that be, pray?"

She glanced at him a second with a slight uplifting of lip and eyebrow. To a lady who had graduated in the Court of King Jerome, this big young man, with his English simplicity, was a trifle irritating.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she said then, turning aside with a shrug of her shoulder, "how embarrassing you are! Do you know your poets? Well, then: he would like to find us playing at Paolo and Francesca, if you please, that he might play the Malatesta!"

"Great Jupiter!" cried the ingenuous youth. Then he saw the lady hang her head and droop a modest eyelid—it was



"Steven was quite pale as he caught her back against his breast."

Scylla and Charybdis! Beyond any doubt, he must walk out of these insecure precincts at the very earliest opportunity.

They were perched high up in the blue, and down below the country lay spread like a green cloth on which a child has set its toys. Yonder white ribbon wandering so far below—there ran his road. Would he were on it! He turned to her, took her soft hand, bent and kissed it.

"Madam," said he, "it is best it should be 'Good-bye'—for both of us; it is best."

He spoke very truly, poor young man, but into the touch of his lips and the pathos of his speech her vanity read another meaning.

"Cousin!" she cried suddenly, and clutched at his hands with both of hers. "O, take me with you! Take me back to my own people! If I stay here, he will kill me, or I shall kill myself!"

And as his troubled face and involuntarily repelling fingers were far from giving her the response she craved, she rushed across and bent over the crumbling parapet.

"Refuse your help," she cried desperately, "and I will throw myself down!"

(Had little Sidonia but been at hand, to tell him how well accustomed she was to such threats!)

Steven was quite pale as he caught her back against his breast.

"Mercy!" He shivered, thinking of those giddy deeps. She clung to him, her scented head against his shoulders.

"Surely, surely it is not much I ask," she murmured faintly. "See how I trust you.

kinsman! Only your protection, your escort back to our own people. It is not much to ask!"

It meant his whole life, and he knew it. But what can a young man do with a woman's arms about him and a woman's whisper pleading in his ears?

"Ha-ha-ha!" came the Burgrave's laugh from below. Countess Betty slid out of "Beau Cousin's" arms. She lifted a warning finger: "I will arrange," she whispered, nodding. "Now must we be seen no more alone together."

Sidonia's voice rang up towards them. "I will write," whispered Betty again, finger on lip. O Heavens! how could she look arch and smile at such a moment?

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"My friend, I have been showing our cousin how far your estate extends," said the lady gaily, tripping across to take the Burgrave's arm with more ease than she had as yet displayed since his return.

"I trust our cousin has profited by your instruction, and that he realises the boundaries of my property," said the Burgrave of Wellenshausen, with his genial smile and his icy eye.

Steven's heavy conscience read a hateful significance in the remark; a sweat broke on his forehead.

As he turned, his glance fell upon the little Baroness Sidonia's pure child-face, and he felt miserable and ashamed to the core.

* * * *

The Burgrave's jaunty *Jäger* stood and saluted in military fashion. The Burgrave wheeled round in his chair and bent his brows. It was dark in the great stone room but for the single shaded lamp on the writing-table which flung a pallid circle of light upon his intent countenance. So might some ancestor of his have looked, four hundred years before, as he planned with his henchman the trick that should rid him of an enemy.

"I have to report, my lord," said the fellow, "that the Count Kilmansegg's travelling-carriage is ordered to be in readiness at the foot of the hill to-night."

"So!" The exclamation was almost triumph.

The man pulled a slip of paper from the breast of his tunic and held it out. "Will your Lordship open it carefully?" he remarked imperturbably, as the Burgrave's eye shot flames and he stretched out an eager hand. "The gracious lady has not yet seen it. And I have promised Elisa that it should not be crushed."

The Burgrave held the note to the light. It was in French and very terse:

"All is ready. I will wait for you at the entrance of the east tower at nine o'clock."

The Burgrave stared at the words for an appreciable time. An apoplectic wave of blood rushed to his bald head, and the veins thereon swelled like cords. Then he folded the paper again with minute precaution and handed it back to the man.

"Return it to the wench and bid her deliver it," he said briefly. "Well, what now?"

"I beg pardon, my lord, but this has cost me my watch-chain to-day. And I took upon myself to promise her further two gold pieces."

"Fool!" said the Burgrave harshly. "Could you not have done as much by love-making? Men are scarce in these parts."

The *Jäger* shrugged his shoulders. "She took the kisses as well," he said cynically. "What will his Lordship have? Women are like that!"

The other flung the coins across the table with an oath. Those were better days, of old, when a man could have his bidding done in his own castle without any such bargainings. But as the servant wheeled and left, the fierce smile of triumph came again to the master's lips: "The entrance of the east tower! You have chosen well, my turtle-doves!"

The Burgrave gradually lost himself in reflection.

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Countess Betty had the megrims and declined to appear at supper. For a sufferer, however, she had a bright eye; and she moved about her room with the alacrity of a busy bird. She was alone, some belated notion of prudence having bade her dismiss her handmaiden during the final preparation. She was gazing wistfully at the dimensions of the small travelling-bag (which was all that, in conscience, she could allow herself, since Cousin Kilmansegg would have to carry it himself down the precipitous roads) and the numberless objects which, at the last moment, seemed to her indispensable, when there came a tap at her window. She started—and only the sense of unacknowledged guilt weighing on her soul kept her from screaming aloud for help—when she

perceived, pressed against the uncurtained pane, a man's face.

The next instant, however, she had recognised the wandering fiddler; she hurried to meet him. This singular being, familiar and welcome in nearly every house of the countryside, was known to her chiefly as the friendly guide of her high-born visitor and "kinsman," the young Count.

"A message?" she cried eagerly.

The man swung himself in and sat on the deep window-seat. His face was wet with rain. He gazed upon her for a second quizzically; and when he spoke, it was not in reply.

"Here I come," said he, "up the ivy, at the risk of my neck, I, upon whom your worthy lord and master would set his dogs without a moment's compunction if he caught me. What a plight should I be in had I counted upon your tender heart sparing a tremor for my perils! 'Tis enough to make a man desire to walk in by the door for the rest of his life!"

"But in Heaven's name," she exclaimed, having but a matter-of-fact spirit, in spite of its dainty envelope, "you did climb up all the way to tell me something. Was it not a message?"

He bowed.

"From him?"

He laid his hand on his heart: "From myself," he answered.

She glanced at him and then at her bolted door with some alarm. He read her thought.

"God forbid!" quoth he, smiling with an air that put him, in his poor raiment, at an extraordinary distance above her. "I should not so presume, madam. Are you aware," he pursued, "that your husband's confidential *Jäger* was in intimate conversation with Count Kilmansegg's postilion in the village to-day?"

"Mercy!" she cried, reading the portent.

"After which, my dear madam, he clomb the hill in a company that lightened the way for him: having, in fact, his arm round the trim waist of your own handmaiden."

Countess Betty sank on a couch, white to her lips.

"Your trusted handmaiden," repeated the fiddler emphatically.

"Alas! if I had hesitated," said the lady, piously turning up her eyes to the vaulted ceiling, "this would decide it; I dare not risk another night in this castle."

"Taking risk for risk," said the musician carelessly, "if I were timid, I should prefer the waiting hazard."

"You mean?" she panted, round-eyed in alarm.

"I mean," said he, "that it is raining exceedingly hard, and that between this and the foot of the crag you will get wet, madam; so wet as to damp for ever the most ardent flame."

The Burgravine rose with dignity. "I will have you know, sir, that I am merely accepting Count Kilmansegg's protection back to my own family, because I know I can trust to his honour."

"Quite so," said Fiddle-Hans soothingly. "And it is, of course, infinitely preferable to set forth by night in secret, with a handsome young man, than to summon any more aged or nearer relative to your help! A father, maybe—or a brother? But it is raining, as I say, madam, very hard. And I am afraid when you arrive in Austria, your noble family may consider your journey ill-managed."

Her bosom heaved.

"It is very unjust," she moaned, "that you men can do everything, whereas we poor women——" she paused on the brink of tears.

"Ah!" he retorted, "you women are the crystal cups that hold the honour of the House! That is why we must set you in a shrine, madam. To-night it is still sanctuary in your presence, and I can still kneel before you. To-morrow——?"

The colour rushed into her face. She tried to speak with haughtiness, but her voice faltered.

"To-morrow—what then?"

"It is inconceivable how much wiser it is to remain under a husband's roof on such a night!"

There came a knock at the door. With squirrel nimbleness the fiddler twisted round and vanished.

The Burgravine took a rapid survey of the room, whisked the bag into a cupboard, the jewel-cases on the top of it, and went to the window to close it.

"One moment, one moment!" she called, as the knocking was discreetly repeated, and paused with her hand on the casement. Certainly it was most uncomfortable weather! Then she opened the door. Sidonia entered.

"Little aunt, is your head better?"

"Yes, child, yes. You have supped? Is it so late?"

Before the girl could answer, the bell of the castle clock began to boom nine strokes.

"Nine o'clock!" shrieked the Burgravine. "What's to be done?"

She struck her forehead with a distraught

"He laid his hand on his heart: 'From myself,' he answered."

air. "I dare not trust that false Elisa," she murmured in her mind. Then her eye met Sidonia's candid gaze and she caught her hand.

"Listen, child; you shall do something for me. M. de Kilmansegg is going away to-night."

The girl's pupils widened, her face grew paler, but she did not speak.

"'Twas I bade him leave. Your uncle's causeless jealousy——"

The girl nodded. The Burgrave, in truth, had been no pleasant companion that night, but had drunk heavily, and alter-

nated between glowering spells of silence and loud and almost offensive pleasantries aimed at his guest, both of which had, not unnaturally, considerably embarrassed Count Kilmansegg.

"'Twas my duty!" (O, how virtuous felt the Burgravine of Wellenshausen!) "I had promised him (poor youth, he is my cousin!) that I would bid him 'Good-bye.' But now"—(positively Countess Betty thought her niece must see the halo growing round her head)—"now it has struck me that if your uncle heard of it, he might misconstrue—— My dear, you must go and tell Count Steven from me——"

"I?" cried Sidonia, and started.

"You must," insisted the lady harshly. "He is waiting in the east tower. Tell him this: My aunt has sent me to say 'Good-bye' for her; it is better so. It is better so. Do not forget to say that. What are you waiting for, girl? Go! Perhaps you are afraid of the rain!" cried the Burgravine scornfully, and seized the travelling-cloak that was lying ready on the bed. "Here, put this on; wrap the hood over your head. Now run, there is not a moment to be lost."

There was perhaps more urgency, more fear, in her voice and manner than she had been aware of; for Sidonia, after a quick look at her, gathered the folds of the cloak about her and fled upon her errand. The Burgravine drew a long sigh of relief, then rang her hand-bell sharply.

"Elisa," said she to the alertly responsive damsel, and, on the spot, froze her with a glance for the impertinent air of confederacy with which she had entered, "light up a fire and serve supper to me. My head is better. Trim the candles and give me 'La Nouvelle Héloise.' How you stare, wench! Have you fallen in love, perhaps, that you do your work so ill to-day?"

* * * * *

Steven's reflections, as he waited in the best sheltered corner of the deserted tower, listening to the beat and gurgle of the rain, were of an unsatisfactory description. The folly of weakness is the worst of follies; the realisation of it the most galling. He was about—no use in trying to blink the fact—he was about to ruin his own life; to take upon himself an intolerable burden; to commit, technically at least, a crime against hospitality; to put a stain upon his ancient name; and all without receiving in return the slightest gratification or being able to proffer, even to himself, the exoneration of any approach to passion. The mere thought of the long, intimate drive was a bore. The prospect of a possible life-long companionship with the Burgravine was intolerable.

Fiddle-Hans, mysterious wretch that he was, had much to answer for. And yet, had Steven followed his advice, things would not be at this pass.

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She came in upon him with a rapid step and a rustle of wet garments. She stopped at the mouth of the passage and said in a loud whisper—

"Are you there, M. de Kilmansegg?"

As he came forward, she clutched him with her little cold hand. "Hush," she went on, "I think I heard steps behind me!"

Both listened, not daring to breathe. O, what a situation for a youth whose pride it had been to hold his head high in the world!

Nothing was heard, however, save the wide, dismal murmur of the rain over the land and the nearer drip and patter.

"No, there is nothing," he said, and reluctantly passed a limp arm round her shoulders. To his surprise, they were jerked from his touch with resentment. The next moment, however, by a mutual movement, they caught at each other; for there came a mysterious grinding about their ears, and almost immediately the solid ground seemed to give way under their feet.

"Gracious Powers! is the tower falling?" cried he. Even as he clasped the figure beside him, with the instinctive, protecting action of the man for the woman, he was aware that the slender thing in his arms could not be the Burgravine. But, at the same instant, he felt that they were sliding; and before he could do aught but throw himself backwards to avoid crushing her, they were shot with celerity down a steep incline. After a few seconds, with a shock, his feet reached level ground; and for a space he lay dazed and breathless, with her weight across his breast. Stars danced before his eyes. Vaguely, as from a great distance, he heard overhead the echo of a laugh, a thud, and once more the grinding sound, as of heavy, rusty bars. It was the laugh that brought him to his senses; too often, lately, had it rung unpleasantly in his ears.

She raised herself in his arms.

"Are you hurt?" he cried as he lay.

"No," she answered quickly; "don't get up!" He heard, by the sudden change in her voice, how she flung the muffling hood

from her head. "Don't get up! don't stir! I must find out where we are."

He recognised the young, clear tones. It was Sidonia. But he was past surprise. One thing flashed clear out of his confusion: whatever it might be that had brought this

"Sidonia gathered the folds of the cloak about her and fled upon her errand."

about, he was glad. To the heart of him, he was glad it was not Countess Betty!

He felt the girl struggle to her feet, heard her grope with her hands above his head. There came a moment of great stillness; he knew she was listening. Unconsciously he hearkened too, and then there grew upon them, out of the roaring darkness, the cry of waters, rising up with a sort of cavernous echo as from a great depth. And, with a flash, his mind leaped back to that fearsome race of brown river that swirled so strangely from the foot of the Burg-crag, just above the village bridge.

He felt his hair bristle. But when she spoke again, the sound of her voice, with its extraordinary accent of decision, roused him like a stimulant.

"We are safe if we but keep where we are," she said. "You may sit up if you like, but do not attempt to stand." And then she added: "You do not know the place—I do."

She sat down beside him; and in the dark he felt her close presence once more with gladness.

"What is this place, then?" he asked, unconsciously whispering.

"It is the old oubliette," she answered with a simplicity which almost made him laugh.

Vague memories of cruel mediæval romance awoke in his brain. Oubliette! The word itself was suggestive, and not agreeably so. "An oubliette is——?"

"The secret trap by which the castellan of old quietly got rid of enemies or of inconvenient prisoners. You see," she proceeded, with her astounding composure, "through this tower, in former days, was the sally-port—there used to be no other way; and were any one, whose existence interfered with the views of the Lord of Wellenshausen, passing out or in, it was easy to set the machinery in motion, with the result——" she broke off.

"Of landing him in our enviable situation," he finished pettishly.

"Not at all," retorted she. "It is the mercy of Heaven for us that time and storm have been at work in these forgotten regions and provided us with so opportune a ledge——"

"What would have happened else?" he asked in a tone that strove to emulate her coolness.

"Sit quietly and listen."

He felt her reach for a stone, felt the tension of her vigorous young body as she flung it. He heard the missile strike the rock sharply, rebound and then rebound

again. Then, after a silence, rose a faint sound, the ghost of a splash, the gulp of greedy, still, far-off waters, infinitely sinister. He shuddered.

"No one knows how deep it is," said she, "nor what lies hidden there. I can tell you, when I first discovered this pit, it terrified me. Old Martin had told me its legends, but I had laughed at him. One day, some months ago, I scrambled in from the outside and explored the place. But I had no notion the old trap-stone in the sallyport still worked. Now I remember," she cried with sudden sharpness, "seeing Uncle Ludo wandering about the place to-day——" She stopped suddenly, struck by a new thought.

"But, in Heaven's name, what have I done to him?" exclaimed the young man. And then his uneasy conscience whipped him silent.

"It is a horrible trick," resumed the girl passionately—"you, his guest——" An indignant sob caught her in the throat. "You his guest!" she repeated. "O, whatever he thought of you, he should have remembered that! I can never forgive him."

And the guest who had meditated, however unwillingly, betrayal of his host, blushed painfully under the cloak of blackness. He heard her swallow her tears and knew that she clenched her hands. After a while she went on more quietly—

"How wise it was of Aunt Betty to tell you to go away! And, O, how glad I am that she sent me instead of coming herself to bid you 'Good-bye.'" Steven opened his mouth and then closed it again dumbly.

"You would both have been killed," she went on, sinking her voice. "Uncle Ludovic must be mad—mad with his foolish jealousy. Ah, dear Lord! if I had not been with you——"

She gave a shudder. He, on his side, had no words—silent in shame before the exquisite innocence; silent in admiration before the self-forgetting courage of this slip of a creature, who thought nothing of her own danger. "Here indeed is good blood—here is the spirit of race!" he thought, touched in his most sensitive chord.

Presently, however, the humour of the situation struck him, and he laughed. There was Thistledown Betty, incapable even of acting up to her own unfaithfulness, snug in her bower doubtless; and there was the outraged husband, gloating over his mediæval vengeance. Steven wished he could be present at their next conjugal meeting. Sidonia, childlike, echoed his laugh softly beside him in the dark. It struck him serious on the instant. The morrow seemed a long way off!

"And now," said he, "what are we to do?"

"Hey, good sir!" said she, "nothing but wait. We shall not die this time, M. de Kilmansegg, for my poor uncle"—she laughed in scorn and triumph—"he did not discover, I warrant, that there is a way out of this old death-trap as well as a way in—a way other than by the hidden lake and the barque of Monsieur Charon. But, till the daylight comes, sir——"

"Daylight?" he said, and knew not whether he were glad or sorry at the whole night's prospect.

"Till daylight comes we must take patience here. For one false step would send our bodies to join the bones of the forgotten enemies of Wellenshausen."

"So, then——?"

"Then, I should say, the best thing we can do is to go to sleep."

Again he was mute, pierced to the innermost fibre of his manliness. It was as if her child-heart had been suddenly revealed to him—its trustfulness, its simplicity, its courage.

"If you move a little to the right, carefully," she said after a pause, "you will find it softer, I think. The earth has grown up there, and there are, I remember, ferns. You will really not be too uncomfortable."

She was positively doing the honours of the family oubliette! There came a tender smile to his lips and almost a mist of tenderness to his eyes.

"But you," said he, "good fairy, guardian angel, do you never think of yourself? Will you lean against me?" he went on almost timidly.

He gathered her to him. What a slight, warm thing she was! She trembled as he passed his arms round her, and he instantly desisted. "Would you rather not?"

"I don't know," she whispered. He thought there was a quaver as of tears catching her breath.

All the chivalry in him leaped to her service. He drew back. With some difficulty he unwound his heavy cloak from about himself. He was stiff and bruised, and the uncertainty of his balance in the blackness gave him an eerie sensation of precipices yawning for him on all sides.

"What are you doing?" she cried severely.

"Let me put this over you," he pleaded. "And then you can roll up your own mantle and make a pillow of it—against me, thus."

"But you—but you——" She struggled against his covering hands so impetuously that he caught her with a grip of alarm. And then the sound of the rock crumbling away and leaping into the gulf gave its significant warning.

"You must keep quiet," said he, for the first time asserting the leadership. "And you must let me hold you and cover you. It is my duty to serve you, Mademoiselle Sidonia, my right to protect you. Sleep if you can. You will be safe, for I shall watch."

She remained motionless a moment and then submitted without a word. He placed his arm about her; her head drooped to his shoulder. There fell silence. In time he felt her rigidity relax, heard her quick breath grow calm and regular.

"You are afraid no more," he said gently.

"I don't think I was afraid," she answered him. Her voice had grown lazy; and, subtly, by the tone of it, he knew that she smiled. He felt ineffably proud of her confidence, ineffably protective towards her.

The minutes went by, passing into hours.

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Something raised a blood-curdling lament that went sobbing and echoing through the cavern. If he had not held her, he would have started in frank alarm. She only gave a drowsy laugh.

"'Tis Barbarossa, the old owl," said she.

And again fell the silence, filled for him with whirling thoughts.

How right had this Fiddle-Hans been in his warning! How merciful had Fate been to save him from his own folly!

Were he now rolling along the wet Imperial road with the Burgrave's wife, he would have had, doubtless, to clasp her much as he clasped Sidonia. Precarious as it was, his present situation was infinitely preferable. He felt like a father, holding his pretty child, all warm with tenderness; not a dishonest, cold lover with the woman he cannot love.

Sidonia's light breathing grew fainter and more rhythmic. She was asleep. He had longed, but hardly dared to hope, that she could sleep. In his heart he went down on his knees to her and thanked her, stirred by the eternal parent instinct, perhaps, but also by another emotion, tenderer still and more vital—a reverent bending of his whole manhood before the purity and trustfulness that lay in his embrace.

* * * * *

The night progressed with lengthening hours.

He had begun to make out some kind of bearings for himself in the dark; to find, by the cold airs that occasionally blew in upon him from one direction, by the guidance of the sounds that grew in the night's stillness, —the gusty increases, the placid subsidence of the rain, the rustle of leaves and twigs—in which quarter of their prison lay that opening to the outer world by which they should escape.

Sometimes his mind wandered far away. Now and again he almost lost himself in a vague dream; but ever he came back with a shock to the present peril and his responsibility.

And the child still slept!

He began to grow weary and cold. His arm became stiff, then numb. The burden that had seemed so light upon it grew almost intolerable. Sometimes as drowsiness pressed upon him, he thought himself in a nightmare, from which he must wake to find himself huddled in a corner of his travelling-chaise. But he would have died sooner than disturb the placid being in his embrace.

Then, at the moment when the tension of enforced immobility brought such a feeling of exasperation and oppression upon him that he almost felt as if his wits were leaving him, he turned his head instinctively in the direction of the air current, and relief came. The rain was over. The clouds had cleared away, and a patch of sky looked in upon him, framed by jagged rocks; it held two or three faint stars; he could see a branch outlined dimly against the translucence, and leaves trembling in outer freedom.

Nothing more than this, and yet it was balm. The torture that gripped him subsided. He gazed and forgot the cramping of his limbs. The first stars passed slowly and vanished; others swam into his vision and formed new shapes in the peep of sky. Some were brighter, some more dim, some twinkled; one burned with a steady glow. They varied in colour, too. He had had no idea that, even through such a miserable hole, the heavens had a pageant to offer of such absorbing interest. And the passing of this pageant gave him a comforting sense of the flow of night towards morn.

Once Sidonia woke with a start and a cry.

"I am here," he quickly said soothingly.

She reared herself from his arm. It was numbed to uselessness; he caught her with the other fiercely. That pit, gaping so close by in the night, had come, during the long hours, to seem to him an unknown monster watching, waiting for its prey.

She, but half awake, gropingly passed her little hands over his face and breast. "I dreamed you had fallen," she murmured. And then, so secure in his hold, stretched herself like a weary child and slid a little further from him so that her head rested on his knee.

His eyes had grown more accustomed to the darkness; or perhaps there was already a raising of the deepest veils of night, for he could almost distinguish her form as she lay. He bent over her; she was speaking dreamily: "When you were hurt, in the forest, this was how your head rested on my lap——" In another moment she was asleep again.

His arms were free—the sense of constraint was gone. And now the time went by almost as quickly as before it had lagged. He saw with surprise that the stars were extinguished; that his patch of sky had grown pearl grey. Sundry stirrings in the leafage without spoke of an awakening world. A bird piped. The walls of their prison began to take shape. . . He saw the white glimmer of her hand in the folds of the cloak. . . And then he knew he must, after all, have slept at his post, for the next thing he knew was coming to himself, with a great spasm, and seeing in a shaft of yellow sunlight, grey rock, brown earth, and Sidonia's golden head upon his knee. And, but a yard from her little, sandalled foot, the horrible black chasm!—O, shame! he had slept, and Death lurking for her! The sweat started on his forehead.

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A sigh of music was blown into the cavern. She turned her head and gazed up in his face with wide, bewildered eyes.

"It is Fiddle-Hans," she murmured, and rubbed her eyes, as though she thought she were still dreaming. Then she sat up, looked round—and memory leaped back.

She smiled, yawned, and drew herself together. "Well," she said, with a sidelong glance at the pit-mouth, "we have had luck, you and I! . . . Don't you want to get out of this, M. de Kilmansegg?" she asked briskly, as he sat, wondering at her. "Or do you think it would be a nice place to turn hermit in? See, this is the way," said she, and pointed to the narrow ledge skirting the deep, "we shall have to crawl on hands and knees. And, sir, I think our cloaks must be sacrificed."

As she spoke, she gathered them together and pushed them from her; they rolled down, and Steven almost called aloud as he heard their heavy plunge into the ambushed waters. It sounded as if some living thing had gone to its death.

"I will lead," said she.

* * * * *

Sunshine, sky, grass, wide airs! Steven had never known what these things could mean to man till that moment. He sat on a sun-warmed rock by the side of the precipitous, all but obliterated, pathway that led zigzag upwards to the broken rampart. Sidonia stood shaking and pruning herself like a bird, her hair glinting in the light. By tacit consent both paused upon this moment of physical relief before considering their next course. From above, the plaintive strain they had heard within their prison was again borne down towards them on the breeze. Sidonia's fingers, busy in her tresses, stopped—she bent her ear. "'Tis Fiddle-Hans, and that is my tune. He is seeking me."

She curved her hands round her mouth and gave a long mountain cry. It rang clear and sweet, cleaving the pure morning air like the call of a bird.

Instantly the restless melody stopped; and, as they stood looking up in expectation, they saw the figure of Fiddle-Hans emerge on the rocks over their heads. Holding his fiddle high in the air, he came clambering down to them with the agility of a goat.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, as, breathless, he drew near. "Cruel children, what a fright you have given me!"

His cheek was grey under its bronze. Yet, in spite of its severity, his haggard eye was quick to note that these two were torn and dishevelled—that their smiles had the pallor which has smiled on death.

"What has happened?" cried the vagrant again in changed accents. And Sidonia broke into passionate complaint. A great lassitude was upon Steven; he did not wish to stir or speak.

"And it was Uncle Ludo did it!" she ended, with a fresh gust of anger. "We heard him laugh, as we fell—and Count Kilmansegg his guest!" Her pride could not stomach the thought; it was less to her, evidently, that her relative should have endeavoured to compass the death of wife as well as guest, for her anger dropped into mere shuddering pity as she added: "Poor Aunt Betty! Just think, if she had not sent me!"

Diverse expressions passed over Fiddle-Hans' countenance as the story unrolled

"Slid a little further from him so that her head rested on his knee."

itself before his quick mental vision. Thunder of anger, clouds of fear and doubt. He shot one searching inquiry at Steven; his brow cleared before the frank answering look.

As the girl finished, the two men once more exchanged glances; the eyes of both had grown soft. For herself the little fearless creature still had no thought, far less words.

"Well, friends," said the fiddler at last, sitting down on the slope and wiping his forehead with his sleeve, "you may flatter yourselves that you've given me no better night than your own. First, Sir Count, having a word to say to you, I made so bold as to take a seat in your carriage, as it waited down yonder—and a moist time I had of it, in company with your Lordship's horses and postilion. By the way, this same postilion hath a varied choice of oaths. Towards the small hours, our relations became strained, and we parted—he back to the 'Silver Stork,' and I—I will not conceal it—to wandering once more in the purlieus of this hospitable strong-house. For although nothing was more natural than that the guest should have altered his intention of departure at the last moment, my mind misgave me."

"Poor Fiddle-Hans!" said Sidonia. "How wet you must have been!"

"Nay, the night had turned fine then—it was the least of my hardships. But at dawn this restless spirit of mine set me to rousing the Castle—and a fine time of it I have given them! The Burgrave, however, was found dead drunk in his hall, so that I could get little out of him. The lady is convinced that you, comrade, have eloped with her niece by some devious road——"

"Devious enough," said Steven, with a short laugh. But Sidonia had become grave.

"I am glad he was drunk," she said with judicial air.

"I left the Burgravine planning hysterics. But I have given orders, in the household, as if I were lord of it all—there are some half-dozen fellows searching the rocks already. And here, by the way, comes one bright youth. Observe how he looks under the whins and the bushes. He will not leave a mouse-hole unprodded for your corpses."

"Shall we not bid him get breakfast for us all?" cried Sidonia gaily. "'Tis the least Wellenshausen can do for you this morning, Count Steven."

She sprang upwards lightly, her small, tired face laughing back at them over her shoulder.

The fiddler and Steven stood side by side watching her.

"Well," said the former, after a pause, "are you inclined to go and break bread again in the house whose stones plotted your blood? Or will you take the safe way down the mountain to the cushions of your berlin and cry: 'Drive on, postilion'?"

Steven regarded the speaker a moment or two before replying. It seemed to the young man as if that long, black night had cut him off from his own purblind youth. He felt himself years older, weighted with life.

"I am going back to the castle," he said, and set off climbing.

"Hey, comrade, hey, what haste?" panted the other at his ear. "What is your purpose up there? You've been there once too often." There was a certain anxiety under the speaker's mocking air.

"My purpose," began Steven coldly—he was about to add, "concerns you not." But on second thought he wheeled round, and all that had been gathering in his heart this night escaped in words of fire. "Why do you ask?" he cried. "You know! What! are you the man to whom the souls of others lie bare? Are you a man like myself, and do you think I can leave that child now? With her little hand she held me from death; she lay in my arms and slept and trusted me. Do you think I could endure myself if I thought I had left her unprotected here? If I give my whole life to the mere guardianship of her, shall I do more than my duty? Man!" cried Steven, catching the fiddler's sunburnt wrist and shaking him, "I tell you, the child lay in my arms all night."

"She is indeed a child," said the musician quietly.

"And it is even for that!" exclaimed Steven. "O, I thought you would have understood."

"Let us go up to the heights, then," said the fiddler.

* * * * *

"No music?" cried Sidonia gaily, as she watched them coming, from the doorstep. "I expected to hear your fiddle chanting the song of delivery!"

"I have enough music in my soul this morning," replied the wanderer.

* * * * *

The Burgrave was a sorry spectacle. A man may play the mediæval avenger

"Holding his fiddle high in the air, he came clambering down to them with the agility of a goat."

overnight, but in the morning he belongs to his own age, and the sense of proportion reasserts itself. The Burgrave's awakening to sobriety, his realisation of his own deed, were depressing to the direst degree. Paradoxically, no less terrible was the discovery that his suspicions had been unfounded; that his wife was both virtuous and still of the living; that it was an innocent niece and an innocent guest whom he had precipitated to an awful doom. He had almost betrayed himself in his first anguished cry on meeting the Burgravine.

"It was Sidonia, then—it was not you, the youth came for?"

"For me?" cried the lady in furious repudiation. "How dared you think so? Why—that minx and he have understood each other from the first, as any but an owl could see. But if the girl's disgraced us, 'tis your own fault, the fault of your evil mind! You drove them to elope, old jealous fool!"

The Burgrave clenched his hands and shook them above his head, fell into a chair and wept. Elope? If she but knew! Alack, poor Sidonia!

"I trust you will come to soberness presently," said Betty, with a disgusted look at the row of empty bottles. And at that moment it was that shouts from the courtyard proclaimed the return of the lost ones.

When the Burgrave heard that his niece was safe, his ecstasy of relief was only measured by the previous misery. He could have leaped and sung. He caught his wife to his breast with fresh tears; but, here repulsed with scorn, tottered forth to the great hall, still reeling in his joy.

The girl met him, severe as a young Daniel, with pointed finger, flashing eye.

"You weep now, uncle; you laughed last night! Was that your farewell?"

The Burgrave stepped back, dismayed afresh; she knew, then, that no mere accident had betrayed them. The wretched Lord of the Castle flung an appealing look around; met the eyes of Steven, scornful—he knew; met the fiddler's eyes, horribly mocking—he knew; met his Betty's gaze, deeply suspicious. In a moment she, too, would know!

Out rang Sidonia's pitiless clarion tongue. And then the Burgravine also knew.

Promptly he was delivered into her hands. She threatened him with King and Emperor, with family and justice, prison, madhouse, duel. The Emperor had put divorce in fashion, she reminded her lord. She would divorce him resoundingly. The last prospect was—since, after all, he loved her in his own fashion—the shaft that hit him hardest.

Natheless, in the affairs of her heart she was a woman of business, and she had a prophetic vision of a return to gay Cassel with a tamed Bluebeard.

* * * * *

"Mademoiselle Sidonia, I am going. Am I to go away alone?" asked Steven. "I have told your uncle how poor a guardian I consider him to you, and he has consented that you should have another. Will you trust me to take care of you?"

She looked up at him, questioning.

"I should call you my wife," said he in a low voice, all astonished himself that his heart should beat so fast.

She drooped her head. He could see the scarlet dye her cheek. "Sidonia!" he said. Then she looked up at him once more.

"I will go with you," she replied.

Her child eyes were upon him and seemed to ask for something still; and at this he bent and kissed her mouth—as he would have kissed a child—and did not guess that, at the touch of his lips, Sidonia's woman-soul was born.

LOVE'S AFTERNOON.

THE sunset radiance on far heights has lain,
And in hushed murmur flows the singing stream;
Amid the maples Autumn splendours gleam,
And shadows slowly creep upon the plain.
Soft purple dusk lies on the fields of grain,
And whispered notes from drowsy robins seem
Like distant echoes from the hills of dream,
Or like the cadence of an April rain.

If Love like dawn and morning fades away,
If only once there comes this thing sublime,
If Love's sweet year holds but a single June—
I will not ask from God another day
Nor plead for Spring again at harvest time,
But walk toward night with thee, through afternoon.

MYRTLE REED.

Photo by] [*Fradelle and Young.*

THE LUNCHEON HELD IN CELEBRATION OF THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF THE Y.M.C.A.

THE Y.M.C.A.

By F. A. McKENZIE.*

SIXTY years ago last June, in a little room on the premises of a famous silk mercer under the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral, twelve young men met together, inspired with a great purpose. They were distressed with the condition of their fellow shop and warehouse assistants. The long hours, poor pay, and inadequate housing accommodation which then prevailed in many London business houses were having their inevitable outcome in the shiftless and purposeless lives of those subject to them.

The twelve young men, with all the boldness of youth, set out to revive religious purpose among their fellows. Their first ambition was to reach the men in warehouses around their own; they dreamed that possibly their work might extend to the provinces. But in their most exalted moments they could scarce have imagined the result that has come. From that meeting on a June evening has sprung a movement which has gone round the world. Alike in London warehouse, in Californian university, and in the tented fields of South African armies; among turbaned Turks, fur-hatted Russians, and the peaked-capped lads of Rhineside colleges; from ebon blacks in Central Africa, brown Arabs to pale-faced sons of Arctic regions, they have gone. The twelve have become nearly 700,000. The little room has spread its branches till to-day there are 7,600 centres. The property alone owned by the Association is now worth considerably over £6,000,000. And the work is only at its dawn; for in this twentieth century, the era of young men, a young men's movement, created by them and propelled with all the force of their youthful strength, presents such possibilities as never before.

There were twelve in the first gathering. At their head was a Somersetshire youth, George Williams by name, twenty-three years

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old, the son of a yeoman farmer, and an assistant in the house of Hitchcock and Rogers, in whose premises the meeting was held. The name of George Williams is now world-known. His story is that of the industrious apprentice. Trained to his trade in a West of England town, he came to London with fixed ideas. He was resolved to get on in business, but he was equally determined to promote the religious principles which he firmly held.

He soon made his mark, for among the apprentices and assistants of Hitchcock and Rogers were many like-minded. At first it was doubtful if the head of the house would approve of the zeal of his young men, but they kept on notwithstanding. Then Mr. Hitchcock himself came out as their disciple, and afterwards as one of their most generous supporters. George Williams advanced steadily. By the time he was thirty he had been taken into partnership. He married his master's daughter, and when riches came proved himself even more energetic in his work for young men than before. When Mr. Hitchcock died, Mr. Williams succeeded him as head of the firm; and years after, when his Queen picked him out for knighthood on account of his philanthropic work, and when the City of London conferred upon him the highest distinction in its power to bestow, men of all opinions knew that the honour had been well earned. Sir George Williams still lives in Bloomsbury, to-day an aged man, but tireless in the task to which he set himself in his youth.

Photo by [*Barrauds.*

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS.
Founder and President of the Y.M.C.A.

In the 'forties, the hundred and one means of rational recreation which we to-day take as a matter of course in London were unknown. The social institutes, educational classes, polytechnics, the easy means of transit to the country, the facilities for athletics, now so common, were then but in their infancy or altogether non-existent. But at first the young men of St. Paul's Churchyard did not aim at providing them. Theirs was a much more limited programme. They wanted to promote religious services in neighbouring houses similar to those they already had at Hitchcock's. They went to work most formally. To spread the interest, Mr. Smith, of another house, in Great Coram Street, was chosen president. The movement was designated from the first by the title—Young Men's Christian Association—by which its work is now known throughout the world. Mr. E. Valentine was made treasurer, two others were chosen honorary secretaries, and the remainder were placed on the committee. They promptly proceeded to take up a collection among themselves for the campaign they had in hand, realising the sum of 13*s.*

Next evening, business over, they set out to find a room suitable for their work. They could not go to great expense, but in a coffee-house in St. Martin's Court, off Ludgate Hill, they secured a room for one evening each week at a rent of 2*s.* 6*d.* Every member was a missionary, and each stirred up the others to promote their purpose. They issued a circular to every large business house in London, and soon their room was too small to hold the young men who came. They transferred their meetings to Radley's Hotel, Blackfriars, in October, and resolved to engage a missionary-secretary who could devote all his time to the work.

These young men were not afraid to back up their beliefs with their purses. They started by collecting contributions among themselves for their work, and continued to do so. The payment of the salary of a man was a serious item for them, but, aided by a few gifts from outside, they managed it.

For the first year the work of the Association was purely a religious one. Their experience among other young fellows proved to the members that they could reach many who would be otherwise untouched if they extended their field of action. When the Association moved to Serjeant's Inn in the autumn of 1845, social work in the form of mutual improvement societies was begun. This was a momentous step, changing at a stroke the conception of the Association from a body that would cater for young men through strictly religious means alone to that of one that would cater for all their needs, religious, physical, and mental. The year 1845 was important in other ways. The first branch was established in the West

of London, and a famous series of lectures, maintained for twenty years, was begun. These lectures, well known afterwards as the Exeter Hall Lectures, were for many years a prominent feature in London life. Almost all the great speakers of the day, English and American, took part in them, and they attracted great audiences.

Photo by [*Lafayette.*

LORD OVERTOUN,
Vice-President of the National Council.

By 1848, religious services had been established in thirty London houses of business, and special premises for the infant body were opened in Gresham Street.

The year 1851 saw the Association grow from a national to an international body. It was the year of the Great Exhibition, when men were dreaming of the reign of universal brotherhood and peace. Mr. Williams and his colleagues determined to use that year, and the opportunity afforded by the large number of foreigners coming to London, to influence the world in favour of their movement. Papers were prepared and carefully distributed. Mr. Williams, who was now a partner in the firm of George Hitchcock and Co., helped to start an Association in Paris when on a business visit there. A student of Columbia University, New York, G. M. Van Derlip by name, had studied the work of the parent body in London, and wrote an account of it in a Boston newspaper, causing a similar organisation to be started there. In the same year Montreal had a Y.M.C.A. organised on the model of the London Association.

Photo by [*Elliott & Fry.*

LORD KINNAIRD,
Vice-President of the National Council.

The movement was now fairly planted. Lord Shaftesbury, the noted philanthropic peer, became its president, and filled this office for upwards of thirty years, to the time of his death. Many lands were following the example of London, and the need was felt of some closer bond between the scattered members. At the time of the Paris Exhibition, in 1855, a conference was called of delegates from Associations everywhere. Thirty-eight Associations in eight countries responded, sending thirty-five delegates and sixty-four visiting members. The Paris Conference, as it has since been known, was one of the historic gatherings of the movement, for at it was laid down the basis of the Association. Many members and delegates, especially on the Continent of Europe, were in favour of formulating a statement of doctrine to which every Association must subscribe. But in the end wiser counsels prevailed, and the Conference determined to form a confederation with one fundamental principle

Photo by [*Elliott & Fry.*

MR. M. H. HODDER,
Vice-President of the National Council.

Photo by [*Maull & Fox.*

MR. ALDERMAN GEORGE WHITE, M.P.,
Vice-President of the National Council.

alone—that of seeking to unite Christian young men together for the purpose of extending the practice of faith among young men.

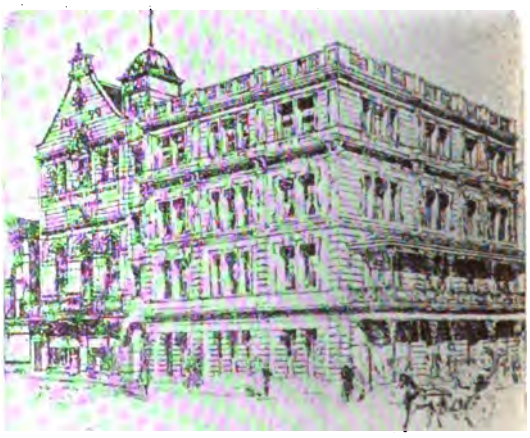
Were I tracing minutely the history of the movement, I would describe here how fresh work opened up in place after place. But, despite openings, there came a pause in the advance in this country. The loose organisation, which had grown up almost spontaneously, was found inadequate. The parent London Association, which was supposed to exercise a parental oversight throughout the country, could not effectively do so. Liverpool, Edinburgh, Manchester, Glasgow, and other large centres jibbed at the idea of being domineered by

IRON ROOM, TAKEN OUT TO THE FRONT DURING THE WAR, FOR THE MILITARY AUXILIARY OF THE Y.M.C.A. AT WOODSTOCK, SOUTH AFRICA.

THE MONTREAL Y.M.C.A. BUILDINGS.

London: they wanted their effective voice in the councils of the movement. The result was seen in the formation of a separate Executive for Scotland, and in the early 'eighties in a re-casting of the organisation, largely brought about through the energy of Mr. J. Herbert Tritton, the well-known banker. The National Council was then formed, consisting of representatives from each District Council, the District Councils in turn being formed of representatives from the different Associations. This has given an effective central organisation, which since then, under the effective supervision of a competent staff of officers, has solved the dual problem of local independence and mutual co-operation.

The purchase of Exeter Hall, in 1880, for the work of the movement, served again to bring it prominently before the world. For nearly a century this hall had been the centre of British philanthropy. Despite Macaulay's sneer against its "bray"—a sneer which he should have been the last man to utter, seeing that he made his first start in public life on the platform of its predecessor, the Freemason's Tavern—the great building in the Strand has had a record of which its owners might be justly proud. The home of the May meetings and a head centre of world-wide beneficence, a thrill of horror went through many when fears were expressed that it might be handed over for secular purposes. Several well-known public men avoided this by subscribing together, purchasing the leasehold of the hall, and making



CAPETOWN.

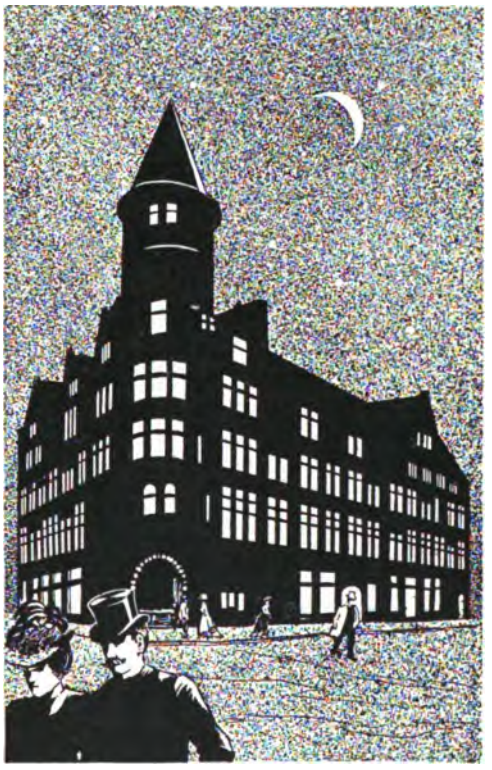
THE NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BUILDINGS.

it the centre for the young men's work. The purchase and alterations cost over £60,000.

Among British Associations, London has ever been foremost as the parent body; but it may be doubted if the work is seen to

THE CARDIFF Y.M.C.A.

such advantage in London as in the great provincial centres. Newcastle, Birmingham, and Cardiff boast the most splendidly equipped buildings in this country. Glasgow has made a bold departure on lines many have often desired should be followed in London. Largely under the leadership of Lord Overtoun, it has built, and successfully manages, a young men's residential club. The great block of buildings in Glasgow is technically divided into three parts—the Bible Institute, the Young Men's



THE Y.M.C.A. AT CLEVELAND, OHIO.

Club, and the Y.M.C.A. For financial purposes, the Young Men's Club is a separate organisation, although controlled by the same men as the Association. It has two hundred bedrooms and is constantly full. Financially it is successful, and it provides for young men a home where they can live with companionship at a cost within the reach of their modest purses.

I state no secret when I mention that the building of a similar residential club has long been discussed in London. The lot of the young man in lodgings here is often a very comfortless one. In times of health it

is barely endurable; in times of sickness it is intolerable. With no friendly associations, with the minimum of the decencies of life, with in some cases badly cooked and badly served food at high charges, he is to be pitied. Some small attempts—and one, Hampden House, on a more considerable scale—are being made by isolated bodies to meet his need. But it yet remains for the Y.M.C.A. to take up the matter really adequately. Great difficulties bar the way; the financial problem alone would be hard to solve; the details of management would be, perhaps, harder. Glasgow has shown that the thing can be done, and some day a strong man will rise up in the Association to do it for London.

Photo by [*Protheroe, Bristol.*

MR. JOSEPH STORRS FRY,
President of the Bristol Branch and Vice-President of the National Council.

Photo by [*Schifer.*

MR. C. J. PROCTER,
President of the Birkenhead Branch and Vice-President of the National Council.

Religion is still foremost in the aim of this young men's movement. But the religious side is supported by many others. Reading-rooms and libraries were among the first additions; refreshment-rooms, where good food at reasonable prices could be had, followed. Then came gymnasia, educational classes of many kinds, cricket and football clubs, boating associations, and athletic organisations of every kind. Holiday schemes followed, holiday homes being established in various parts of the country, on a self-supporting basis. In short, the aim of the movement has been to cater for the whole man in all his needs.

It was found that some branches of the work could best be done by special bodies. It has ever been the glory of this movement that much of the great philanthropic work of the past half-century has come from it, while not bearing its name. Thus the United States Christian Commission, which did such splendid service during the Civil war, was formed at a convention of American Associations. In England we have an Army organisation, known as the Soldiers' Christian Association, formed by and connected with the Y.M.C.A., which did nobly during our South African war in providing comforts for our men.

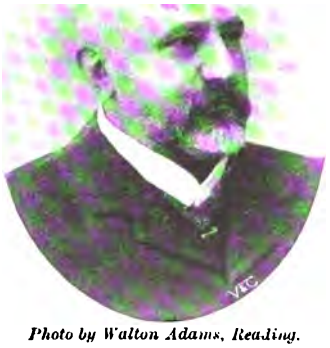


Photo by Walton Adams, Reading.

MR. MARTIN JOHN SUTTON,
President of the Reading Branch.

Photo by Midwinter & Co., Bristol.

MR. JOHN CORY,
President of the Cardiff Y.M.C.A.

During recent years special efforts have been made directly by the Y.M.C.A. to cater for Volunteers in their encampments throughout the country. The illustrations accompanying this show the nature of the work better than long descriptions.

A report of the first year of this work said: "The men were supplied with pen, ink, and blotting-paper, also specially printed writing-paper, envelopes, and post-cards. We

sold stamps, sent telegrams, wrapped up parcels, and did everything we possibly could to be of service to the men. Dozens of them commissioned us to purchase presents for their children. More than a hundred came to us for remedies for toothache, headache, colds, and other slight ailments. We gave away a large amount of literature. More than fifty men signed the temperance pledge. The writing-tables were always crowded; also those devoted to games and reading. The singing was greatly appreciated, as well as the free and easy character of the meetings."

HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD'S COMMITTEE, GENEVA.

At Dartmoor, the military authorities gave the Y.M.C.A. tent its wood and coal free, and provided it with water from the water-carts, no small boon when it is remembered that otherwise water would have to be carried half a mile up a steep hill. "The sergeant-major of one battalion, which has always borne a bad name, called at the close of camp and heartily thanked us," writes the worker in charge. "He said that, most exceptionally for his battalion, there had not been a crime to deal with, and he put it down to our tents."

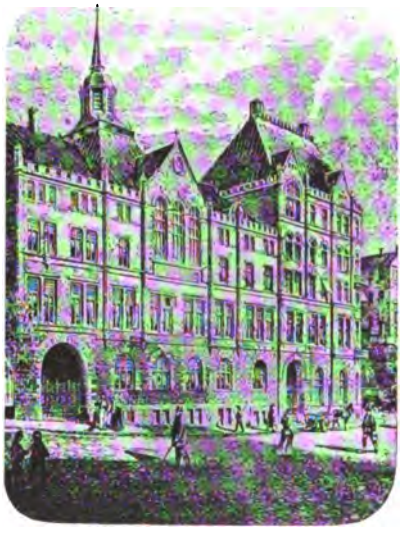
To the man who has not time to study details, one of the best evidences of the

Photo by] [*Martin and Sallnow, Strand.*

A Y.M.C.A. GYMNASIUM.

admirable and practical work the Association is doing in this country is the strong support it is receiving from leading employers of our youth. Among its active helpers, business men come first. Sir George Williams is, as has already been told, head of the great silk mercers of St. Paul's Churchyard; Mr. M. H. Hodder, head of the publishing house of Hodder and Stoughton, has worked with him from the beginning; Mr. F. A. Bevan, and his father before him, and Lord Kinnaird, of the banking-house of Barclay and Co., have been among the most generous contributors to the movement. In the West of England, the most liberal supporter is Mr. J. Storrs Fry, of Bristol, whose firm is known in all lands; in Wales, Mr. John Cory, the coal king, gives personal service and purse both in unstinted measure; in Manchester district, Mr. W. J. Crossley, of the gas engineers, leads; in Scotland, Lord Overtoun, the famous chemical manufacturer, is the foremost in every scheme; in the Home counties, Mr. M. J. Sutton is in front. These prominent business men not merely lend moral support and the weight of their names to the movement, but are unceasing workers for it. Among others whose unceasing work has brought them to the front must be mentioned Mr. C. J. Procter, head of the Birkenhead Association, and Dr. Hingston, of Plymouth. The list might be almost indefinitely extended.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, Y.M.C.A. BUILDINGS.



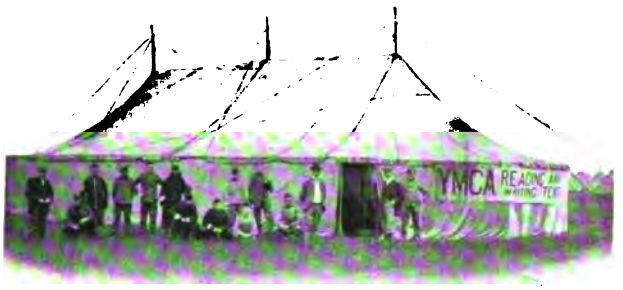
THE Y.M.C.A. AT STOCKHOLM.

THE Y.M.C.A. AT TOKIO.

THE TIENTSIN Y.M.C.A.

But it must be admitted by all who know the world-wide nature of this work, that while England was the pioneer and has done much, America has left it behind. The United Kingdom to-day has

127,000 members; the United States has 373,000, or nearly half of the world's total. In this country the Association owns buildings to the value of £812,669; in the United States the buildings owned are worth nearly £5,000,000. And these outward evidences are but signs of a movement that has gone further than here.



EXTERIOR OF A Y.M.C.A. TENT AT A VOLUNTEER ENCAMPMENT.

In America the workers have not been bound, as in Europe, by old traditions. For instance, in British universities the intense caste feeling makes work such as this charged with all manner of difficulties; in the universities of the Western States there is no such tradition. And although British business men have liberally supported the organisation, they have been outdone by their trans-Atlantic rivals. Big American Associations receive great gifts as a matter of course such as England scarce dreams of. The Association in each city is the pride of the place, and the leading men feel that their local reputation is bound up with making the building as fine as possible.

INTERIOR OF A Y.M.C.A. VOLUNTEER TENT.

The result is that the American Associations have been able to do their work on a scale and with a degree of luxury undreamed of here. In Chicago the home of the Association is a fifteen-storeyed sky-scraper, valued at nearly £400,000, and with twenty-five branches. The receipts amount to £42,000 a year, and

ANOTHER CAMP INTERIOR.

the salaries paid total £5,600, excluding the allowances paid to the heads of different departments. At Montreal, in Canada, the Association is housed in a veritable palace. In Cleveland, the Association, with its magnificent home, is a power throughout the city. Universities vie with cities, and the wealth of America stands behind. The notable work recently pushed forward for the U.S. Navy has been promoted and financed by Miss Helen Gould. The building alone cost just on £100,000. A beginning with the sailors has already been made in England by the recent affiliation, as an auxiliary of the Y.M.C.A., of the Royal Naval Christian Union, which embodies the results of Miss Agnes Weston's remarkable work among British seamen.

Photo by [*London Stereoscopic Co.*

MR. W. H. MILLS,
Secretary to the National Council.

MR. W. HIND SMITH,
Senior Travelling Secretary of the National Council.

The three main lines where the American movement is distinguished above others are the railroad work, the student volunteer movement, and the boys' organisations. The railway work is typical of the land of long distances. The railwayman is, by the nature of his toil, more away from home than others. From sheer lack of companionship, when waiting at different junctions, he has been driven to saloon and gambling-den. The Y.M.C.A. set out to help him by building premises at the great centres where trains wait, solely for the use of the men of the trains. Bedrooms at reasonable rates, good food, pleasant surroundings, baths, and homeliness have been the note of these homes. They have succeeded beyond expectation.

Photo by [*Russell & Sons.*

MR. J. H. PUTTERILL,
General Secretary of the London Central Association, Exeter Hall.

Part of this success has been due to a lady—Miss Helen Gould, daughter of the late railway king. Miss Gould, who is to-day perhaps the most prominent figure in American philanthropy, apparently inherits the brains of her father, for she brings an amount of shrewdness and practical business skill to bear on her benevolent schemes which is even of more service than the liberal gifts she supplies. In the case of the railroad work, she has not only supplied funds bountifully, but gives them in such a way that the railroad authorities themselves have been led to give more. She travels largely among the railroad branches, encouraging and helping, her

Photo by Welfond, Birmingham.

MR. HENRY WHITWELL,
General Secretary of the Birmingham Cen'ral Y.M.C.A.

special train being always welcome on the lines.

But the railroad authorities themselves have recognised the merits of this work. On American railways, character among the men has always been given special prominence. Company after company absolutely forbids smoking or drinking by its servants while on duty. Sobriety is so valued that

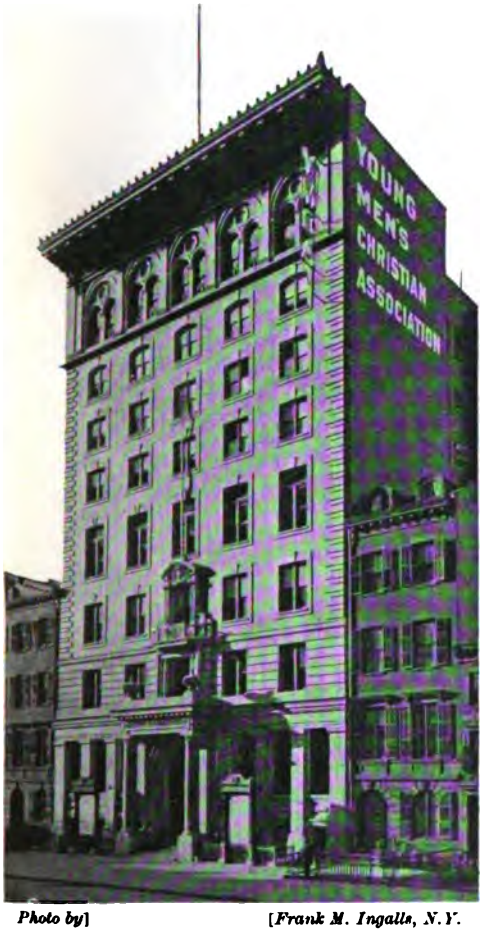


Photo by] [*Frank M. Ingalls, N.Y.*

THE Y.M.C.A. IN NEW YORK.

the railway hand who is even distantly suspected of love of drink is doomed. The American railroad corporations are ruled with a strength the world little realises. Their presidents are kings in their way, who lift men to fortune or reduce them to penury at a stroke of the pen, who make districts prosperous or bankrupt almost as they will, and who hold the well-being of scores of thousands in their grasp. They found that the railroad work was helping

BIRMINGHAM Y.M.C.A.
Opened by the Duke of Argyll, October 13th, 1904.

to give them more reliable helpers, and they opened their coffers for it.

To-day the Railroad Y.M.C.A. has 197 departments, 125 buildings, valued at nearly £350,000, and 70,000 members. Most of the funds come, not from the gifts of

THE Y.M.C.A. BUILDING, CHICAGO.

corporations and philanthropists, despite their liberality, but from the men themselves, who show their appreciation of what is done by paying well towards it. This is an organisation which concerns every citizen. The clear head, steady nerve, quick eye, and courage necessary at a crisis are better cultivated in one of these Young Men's Associations than in a public-house.

The students' volunteer movement represents one of the great waves of self-denying enthusiasm

Y.M.C.A. BUILDINGS, RANGOON.

THE BUILDINGS AT HONOLULU.

to go out into the foreign mission field. Some months afterwards an executive committee of six was chosen to spread the fire. Men went everywhere preaching a new crusade, and soon the volunteers were counted, not by the hundred, but by the thousand. Lads with great prospects before them threw up their all. Mr. John R. Mott, known in many lands as the apostle of the movement, came to the front, and he and his fellows set themselves to carry out the spread of faith throughout the world in this generation.

the world at rare intervals witnesses. In 1886, Mr. D. L. Moody, the well-known evangelist, invited representative students to meet for a summer conference at his great missionary schools at Mount Hermon, Northfield. The conference was a remarkable one, marked by great enthusiasm, and at the end a hundred men volunteered

A Y.M.C.A. SEASIDE HOLIDAY HOME, RYDE.

CALCUTTA COLLEGE BRANCH OF THE Y.M.C.A.

In this country the Cambridge Seven, including the famous athletes, Stanley Smith and Studd, aroused similar enthusiasm by their journey through our universities before proceeding as missionaries to China. From America alone 1,800 of those who thus volunteered have gone abroad on

their new crusade, and the end is not yet.

England and America have united for the purpose of work in heathen countries. In India there is keen friendly rivalry, on co-operative lines, between them, to see which will do most. English merchant princes rival American business men in their ready gifts for new buildings there. These donations are never heard of outside a very limited circle, yet for size they well compare with bequests on more popular lines that give men great reputations.

The boys' work is the newest organised branch, and promises to be one of the greatest. The Association now deals separately with lads, providing special secretaries for them, and in some cases special buildings. The new departure was formally adopted in America some years ago. Within a year 40,000 lads had been enrolled. The men at the head of the lads try to give them a due sense of their coming manhood, and to afford them abundant means for physical training and for mental improvement.

Boys' camps are one of the most successful means of catering for the younger fellows, a means which must make lads in older lands feel somewhat envious. The camps are planted down in some country part during holiday time, where the youngsters can live for weeks together in the open air, leading a free and easy life such as boys love, and yet overlooked by those who can take care of them. The favourite site for a camp is by lake or river side, and in America it is often possible—

A GROUP OUTSIDE THE Y.M.C.A. BUILDINGS, OSAKA, JAPAN.

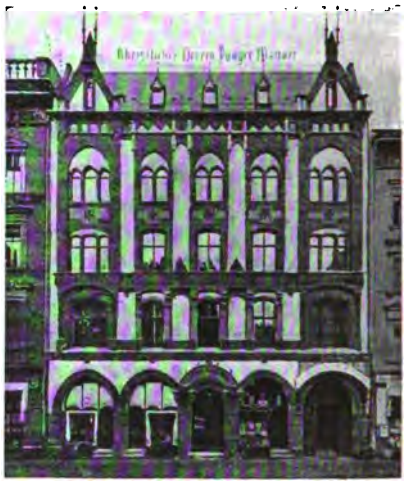
A Y.M.C.A. GROUP AT TRAVANCORE.
Reproduced by permission of the Church Missionary Society.

A Y.M.C.A. GROUP AT ACCRA.

as, alas! it is not here—to get right away from other people and from civilisation.

In such camps, of course, all depends on the leader. One man will plan a camp of a hundred boys, and manage it successfully without a single set rule. Another will make all manner of regulations for a camp of ten, and will fail. In dealing with boys, the character of the man at the head is the only thing that tells, as many a well-meaning but weak man has found to his cost. Woe be to the leader who attempts to rule a camp without clearly knowing his mind and being able to enforce it!

In England the boys' movement has yet to come to any extent, although come it must. The summer camps here, such as the one Sir Alfred Harmsworth has each year for East London lads on the cliffs at Broad-



THE Y.M.C.A. AT BERLIN.

THE Y.M.C.A. AT SAN FRANCISCO.

stairs, have not been carried out under the auspices of the Association. But it is one of the new fields of work for the twentieth century of which we will hear more.

In Greater Britain, as is fitting, this young men's movement has made steady advance. Canada shares the progressive movement of the United States. India and Ceylon and the Far East have been the centre of a strong missionary movement, that has resulted in the planting of 167 Associations in our Eastern Possessions alone. In Hong Kong there is an outpost. Australia received a check during the time of the great financial crisis a few years since, but it now has nineteen Associations and over three thousand members. In New Zealand, strangely enough, the movement is weak, there being only three Associations, with a total of four hundred members there. In South Africa, workers such as Sir Henry Bale, K.C.M.G., Mr. Gordon Sprigg, nephew of the ex-Premier of Cape Colony, are seeing that the new nation arising there has an organisation worthy of it. Abroad, Germany comes next to the United States. In the number of separate Associations, including Lutheran and other societies, it comes first of all, before even England; but for membership it ranks third. It has 1,885 organisations, and 100,588 members. Finland makes a gallant fight with forty

THE Y.M.C.A. AT SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

Associations; and even in Russia there are thirty-three. There is not a country in Europe — excluding petty Principalities — where this body is not represented. It stretches further—to Iceland and Hawaii.

If the Y.M.C.A. had done its work, and were merely of historic interest, it would have no place here. It is, as I write, in the beginning of its strength, and with prospects before it such as it never had before. Its founders wisely kept it free from many restrictions, leaving it free to develop along certain very broad lines. It has a platform on which men of every variety of creed who hold to the basic facts of the Christian faith can unite. It is definitely religious and makes no concealment of the fact. Christianity at once supplies the foundation of its strength and the motive for its work, and will continue to do so.

A WEST AFRICAN Y.M.C.A. GROUP AT LAFIAJI.

A Y.M.C.A. CYCLING CLUB GROUP ON THE CONTINENT.

Its leaders recognise that the methods and agencies of the nineteenth century may not do for the twentieth. This is a generation impatient of formalism and pretence. The Y.M.C.A. has to hold its own by practical work, and by clearly doing what it professes to do—helping men at the beginning of their manhood. A movement like this always has dangers, chief of which, perhaps, are cliquism and an unhealthy pietism at war with real, manly Christianity. The "Y.M.C.A. young man" has not always been an admired type. The exceptionally flabby specimens who brought down sneers on all are being more and more eliminated or improved. The Associations have to see to it—as, in fact, they now do—that the type is stamped out; and if this movement is to accomplish its full purpose, it must give young men more and more a controlling voice in its councils. In a young men's movement we do not look for the caution and wisdom of mature manhood, but for the mad enthusiasm, the apparently forlorn hopes, the generous endeavour which, by their very seeming unreasonableness, accomplish things which leave mature wisdom astounded. The madness of

youth has before to-day done what the sages declared impossible, and in this young men's movement it will do the same again if given a free hand.

What are to be the great lines of advance in the twentieth century? In the nineteenth century the British movement was most successful in catering for the clerk and shop assistant. Now it will lay itself out for two other kinds of men—the skilled mechanic and the college student. A splendid field lies open for it in providing technical training for young men of a good type. Here the thing must be superbly well done, or had better not be attempted. An effort to house young men, such as I mentioned earlier, and to provide them with reasonable comforts, involves so much that those at the head may well hesitate; but it is an obvious field, with the greatest possibilities. In religion this movement has already been the great feeding-ground for foreign mission workers; it will be so more and more.

Here everything depends on the men. And it is from the character of the men at the head that I augur well for the future of the Y.M.C.A. They recognise that the deeds of yesterday will not satisfy the need of to-morrow, that new times want new plans, and that while the principles of their work are the same, the way those principles are proclaimed must change. They have the record of great accomplishments behind them, and the promise of greater things before.

Photo by] [*Dorrett and Martin, Strand.*

THE ENTRANCE TO EXETER HALL, STRAND, THE HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE Y.M.C.A.

THE ROOM IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD IN WHICH THE Y.M.C.A. WAS FOUNDED.

THE EMBROIDERY FRAME.

By Bertha Newcombe.

THE HANGING OF O'DWYER.

By DORA SIGERSON SHORTER.*

"THOSE were the queer times," said old Dan McLoughlin, filling his pipe and drawing a long pull at it. "I've seen a man, myself, hanged for stealing a bit of a sheep. And now you might kill a man, and it's ten chances to one you would get off easy. Aye, I'll tell you about it if you like—when I get a good draw on my pipe.

"He was a lad named Mike O'Dwyer, and was an out-and-out poacher. Anything he could steal tasted to him sweeter than what was honestly come by. There was a great suspicion about the countryside that he did not stop at rabbits and hares. Sheep were missing now and again, and disappeared as if the ground had opened and swallowed them. Suspicion was flitting here and there, like an ill bird, and often settled by honest men's doors.

"Well, it flew to the right man at last. One morning, as I was out in my father's fields driving the plough, I saw my laddo running like a hare down the long boreen beside Clonleigh Hill. And I guessed what had happened. The soldiers were stalking him. When they seen him running, they sprang from their hiding, and there was the hunt, I can tell you. They nigh caught him at the end of the boreen, but he slipped by them and out into the open like a hare. He went across three ploughed fields before they took up on him. Then he headed for the hill like a fool, and I knew all was over with him, for I could see he was dead beat and not fit for the climb. The others were trained running men, being soldiers," said old Dan, with a sly glance at my uniform. "They should be. Well, I shouted to him and waved my hands. But it was no use. He rushed on, and discovered his fault when it was too late; then he turned and ran right back amongst his enemies. What possessed him I cannot tell. He may have thought to get through them, or went blindly, like a hare does into the mouths of the dogs. And like a hare among dogs, they tossed him and left him for dead. So there was nothing for me to do but to go and tell his widow.

"I stood before the door for a long time trying to find pluck enough to go inside; for you never can tell how a woman will take a thing. She was a big woman, with a tongue that was never easy. She and Mike, I often heard, led a cat-and-dog life. They had never done argufying and scolding at one another. You would think she would be lepping at the news I had to tell her, if you had heard them fighting. But I knew better than to depend on a woman. So I stood at the door looking at her without saying a word. But all the time I was thinking what I would say to break the bad news.

"I need not have minded thinking, for the minute she saw me she began as if I had been in the middle of a conversation with her.

"'It's an ill day for a woman when she marries,' said she; 'what with mending, and feeding, and looking after himself all day, it's no life at all, at all. Look at me now!' she says, turning herself, so I could see what a fine, healthy woman she was. 'Would you ever think I was Moll D'Arcy, the gayest girl in the town? Sure, who would know me? Isn't it the desolation he has made of me?'

"'I'm thinking,' I said slowly, when she stopped for breath, 'he will give you no more trouble now.'

"'Is it no more trouble?' she cried. 'While there's a gasp in him he will give me trouble. In the house or out of it, it's all the same; trouble will follow home and roost beside him.'

"'He has gone on a long journey,' I said softly, putting a fill of tobacco into my pipe and pretending to smoke; for I was uneasy—how to get her to understand. 'I'm thinking——'

"But the words were not out of my mouth before she commenced again, too full of her own grievances to see that I was trying to

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"'That's an ill tune,' says he, 'you are all singing.'"

tell her something. Her face was red with temper, and she kept cleaning all the plates and pans she had already done hours before, and which were so clean and shining I could see her angry face in them as she took them up one by one.

"'So he's gone off with himself,' she cried, 'without a "Good-bye" to me; and I getting the dinner for him! The grandeur of him, walking in and out without a word to throw to a dog!' And when she said that, the old Irish terrier looked up from his seat by the fire for sympathy at her. 'Never a word to throw to a dog,' says she. 'I suppose the police or the soldiers are after him. I expect he has been poaching again—stealing honest men's rabbits. The thief! He'll get strung up for it one of these fine days. Mark my words!'

"I saw there was no use in trying to hint

to the woman any longer. I put no hold on women's wits at any time, but Moll O'Dwyer was the dullest to take a wink I ever saw. So as Mike was more used to her than myself, I thought I would let him do the telling. I just rose to my feet and took a long pull of the pipe.

"'Come out and I'll take you to him,' I said. 'He's beyont on the hill.'

"'And is that the long journey he has gone to, Dan McLoughlin?' she cried, turning on me like a flash; but something she saw in my face at last stopped her. She stood, her mouth open, with the last shrill word, till it shut on her gasp of 'Dead!'

"'Dead as a dog,' I said; and the old terrier looked at me and banged the floor with his tail. So before I thought I changed my words and said: 'Dead as mutton.' And when I said it, the word seemed to tell her all.

"'For sheep-stealing?'

"I nodded, for I was sorry; she got so white. She stopped a moment without saying a word, and then fell to screeching and crying so the neighbours came in crowds to the door to see what had happened. 'Vo! Vo!' she cried. 'He never gave me an hour of trouble since I married him seven years ago—as good a man as ever stepped the earth. To be strung up now for a dirty old sheep!' She threw her apron over her head and began to cry softly behind it.

"'There was no harm in the man,' said I, to comfort her. 'With his bits of nets and traps, they should not have minded him; sure, he never caught anything, the creature.'

"But that did not please her either—women are so contrary.

"'Is it not catch anything?' she said. 'God rest him! sure, I never spent a shilling on meat since I married him, he was that clever with his hands. Ochone! Ochone! we never had a cross word between us, and now he is gone for ever.'

"'Come out and bring him home,' I said, thinking it would comfort her to see his body and deck it out for the wake. 'The soldiers will be gone, and some of the boys of the town will be bringing him here by this.' So they all followed me outside and down the long road, till we got to the turn where the hill was in sight.

"There the women let a screech and went down on their knees praying, for they could see poor Mike swinging, and the boys around him trying to get him down. It was not long before he was on his way home, carried by four big lads, and they looking all about to keep the tears from falling from their eyes; for Mike O'Dwyer was well liked, in spite of his wild ways. But the women raised a keen over him that well might have awakened the dead—and it did that same, sure enough; for when Mike was laid down gently on his bed, and Moll on her knees beside him crying, he raised his head and spoke—

"'That's an ill tune,' says he, 'you are all singing.'

"Well, the row there was then, you may be sure—the women nearly fainting, and the men looking as if they had seen a ghost! Moll O'Dwyer was the first to recover herself, and if she didn't give it to him, then and there!

"'Oh,' says she, 'the disgrace to a decent woman, to have a husband who was hanged! Mo vrone, but this is the worst of all your bad acts, Mike O'Dwyer. Oh, but it's the trouble I have with you always, and the black disgrace! To come into my house, and you just off the gallows! Oh, you robber! What would my poor father say? May the heavens be his bed if he knew!'

"Then Mike O'Dwyer sat up in his bed and looked round on us all, quite calm, as if he had never been hanged.

"'And who is this woman at all?' said he, looking at me so I thought he was a bit mad after his adventure, poor chap.

"'Why, your wife,' says she, patting him on the shoulder to give him courage. 'Mrs. O'Dwyer, and no one else.'

"'Oh! the widow O'Dwyer,' says he, giving me a wink. 'And what is she hectoring me for—the widow O'Dwyer?' says he again.

"With that she grew very mad with him, and I thought her tongue would never stop; but in every pause she made for breath he just said calmly: 'The widow O'Dwyer, poor soul!' till she grew frightened at last and spoke to him softly.

"'Mike,' she said, 'don't you know yourself, Mike O'Dwyer?'

"'I'm not Mike O'Dwyer,' says he. 'Mike was hanged this morning; and I'm sorry for you, mam, you being a widow, and your husband dying as he did,' says he.

"'I'm your true wife,' she sobbed, laying her hand on his.

"'You're the widow O'Dwyer, mam,' says he, pushing her away, 'and I'll thank you not to put your hand on me, for you have no call on me at all, at all. For shame on you, mam, and your husband not cold, or waked yet, and him hanged on the gallows this day!'

"With that he rose from the bed and strode to the door, leaving us all amazed and laughing, all but the poor wife.

"'I'm a free man,' he says, stretching his arms as if to throw off a yoke, and he added with a grin: 'I'll be hanged if I marry—it's a dog's life,' says he, stepping outside; and the old Irish terrier rose and followed him. 'A dog's life, and I'm done with it,' and with that the two of them walked off.

"Poor Mrs. O'Dwyer, seeing her man disappear, ran to the door like one demented. 'Mike, Mike, come back, mavourneen,' says she. 'It's breaking my heart you are with your joking.'

"He was a soft man was Mike O'Dwyer, and I suppose he had a weakness for the woman; at her cry he turned and came to the door.

"'If I was resurrected and came home to you again, widow O'Dwyer,' said he, 'you would never be done nagging at me for getting hanged.'

"'I'd not breathe a word about it,' she cried, going down on her knees before him. 'Don't leave me, Mike!'

"'Would you ever cast it up to me that I was only half hanged, or ought to have been hanged, or talk of the gallows to me at all, making my life a misery?' says he, his eyes growing soft, and he looking like a man who had won a hurley match.

"'Never,' says she, 'never as long as sun has light and earth has graves. I swear it you before them all, never a word will I say about what happened to you to-day.'

"'And who are you, anyhow,' says she in a white rage, 'that's talking? Haven't I worn my fingers to the bone working for you?'—she held a fat fist into his face."

"Well, the end of it was, we left them there cooing and courting as if it was their wedding-day. I had no business their side of the town for a month or so, and saw nothing of the O'Dwyers till then.

"One evening I slipped into their cottage unbeknownst to them, or, if they saw, they were too busy quarrelling to pay any attention to me.

"'It was a bad day for me when I met you,' said he. 'If I could work as fast as you talk,' says he, 'I'd be a rich man this day.'

"'Work!' said she. 'I wonder the word does not choke you; you don't know the meaning of it; you never did a day's work in your life, nor never will.'

"'It's hard enough work for any man sitting here listening to you,' says he, puffing away at his pipe and enjoying himself, as I could see by the gleam in his eye. 'It's a dog's life I am leading,' he said, bending to caress the terrier, that lifted its head and slowly winked at him. 'Never a cow did you bring to me, or a bit of land! I wonder what I saw in you at all, at all!'

"Mrs. O'Dwyer grew red at that and began to raise her voice.

"'And is it my father's daughter that is not good enough for you, Mike O'Dwyer? One of the oldest families in Connaught—John D'Arcy, of D'Arcy's Town. He was none of your common Darcy's. He was Mr. D. with an apostrophe Darcy.'

"'He may have been all that,' says Mike, 'but I'd as soon he had given me a woman with a cow, or two or three acres of land, and I'd never have said a word about wanting the apostrophe.'

"'And who are you, anyhow,' says she in a white rage, 'that's talking? Haven't I worn my fingers to the bone working for you?'—she held a fat fist into his face—'Haven't I done for you this seven year, slaving and toiling, and not a "Thank you"? Who are you, making allegations on my father's daughter? A thief, a poacher, a——' but here she stopped. I could see she remembered her promise, and her face grew red with her desire to fling his hanging in his teeth.

"She looked at him where he sat smoking, his eyes daring her to break her word.

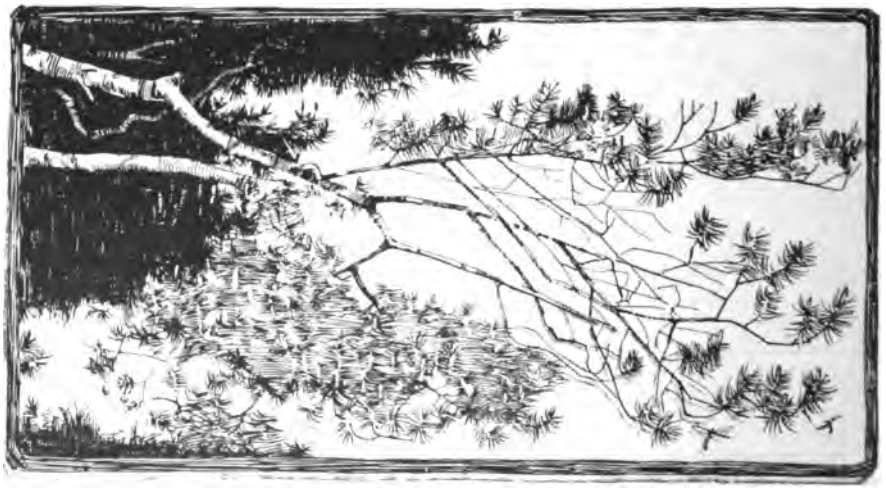
"'And I took That,' says he, nodding at her, when she hesitated, 'without a gold piece, or even a couple of hens to cover the expense.'

"But this was too much. Without a word Moll slipped off her apron, and snatching a piece of turf from beside the fire, she tied the string of her apron across the middle of the sod, then using a chair as a mimic gallows, she threw the turf over the back.

"'See here, Mickie,' she said, swinging it up and down, 'see here!'

"'I thought she'd get the better of me,' said Mick, with a roar of mirth, as he heard me laughing in the corner. 'Trust a woman. Without saying a word, too. Come over, acushla,' he said, putting his hand in his pocket, 'till I show what I got you at the fair.'

"'And is it yourself that's there, Dan McLoughlin?' she said to me softly, 'and a lone man still? Why don't you get married and have a home for yourself, like me and Mike here, who never had an angry word between us, and we married this seven years?'"



THE REASON.

"I AM sorry I spoke sharply to that boy. I must have cut him to the quick."
"Oh, it's all right, aunt; he has no quick."
"Has no quick?"
"No. He's a messenger boy!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

CORRECT MATILDA.

MATILDA PRIM was so correct
In language and in mien
That up and down in all the town
Her equal ne'er was seen.
Her hair was always smoothly brushed;
She never tore her clothes;
She was the pink of neatness from
Her forehead to her toes.

She never used improper nouns,
Or verbs irregular.
Odd numbers she'd avoid, lest they
Her even speech should mar.
Unto the question, "Who is there?"
When other folk would cry
"It's *me*," the mild Matilda's tones
Would answer, "It is I."

Her teachers and her parents fond
This wondrous child adored,
But by her small companions she
Was fervently abhorred.

When visitors at school appeared
It made the children scoff
To see the teacher's eager haste
To show Matilda off.

One day a grave examiner,
On his inspection tour,
Walked in, and straight this model child
Was summoned to the fore;
But, oh, with what embarrassment
She heard the teacher's words
Which confidently bade her add
Four-sevenths and two-thirds!

Before the board she blushing stood.
The children dumb were struck;
They nearly died of their delight
To see Matilda stuck.
"Oh, teacher, dear, I can't!" she cried—
With tears her eyes were dim—
"For fractions are so *vulgar*," said
Correct Matilda Prim.

Jennie Betts Hartswick.

THE ONLY WAY.

"WHAT a rider! I wonder anyone trusts him with a horse."

"They don't; he has to deposit the price before they allow him to mount."

THE DELIBERATE MAN (obstructing the thoroughfare whilst conversing with a friend): By the way——

IMPETUOUS YANKEE (in a hurry): Buy the whole road, if you like, but kindly let me pass.

TIRESOME STRANGER (joining a man at his table in a restaurant): You don't mind me sitting at your table, do you?

FIRST MAN (gushingly): Not in the *least*—I'll go to another.

FIRST MAN: I don't wrap my insults up.

SECOND MAN: I do—in transparent paper.

"IF you are trying to excuse something inexcusable, one excuse is as good as another."

LUXURIANT POET (introducing himself to a surly Editor): My father was a humorist, sir.

SURLY EDITOR: I do not doubt it.

THE LAW OF COMPENSATION.

(*See opposite page.*)

There is, philosophers declare,
A law of compensation,
Which soon or late with balance fair
Adjusts the situation;

Though parting guests the landlord's till
Have slily circumvented,
The coming guest will find his bill
In like degree augmented.

OLD LADY (at door of a compartment already holding sixteen passengers): Is this train goin' ter 'Ammersmith?

SQUASHED CYNIC: No, madam, to Heaven.

SHOP ASSISTANT (trying to be funny to a customer who has bought one cigarette): Shall I put it in paper for you, sir?

CUSTOMER: Thank you, someone has done that already.

TENDER-HEARTED.

DANBY, R.A. (to lady student): Yes, Miss Smith, the Old Masters used to mix their colours with brains in those days.

MISS SMITH: Oh! how cruel!

"THE LAW OF COMPENSATION." BY F. W. BURTON.

'ARRY (indignant at being restrained from smoking in a General Waiting Room): 'Ere, guv'nor, w'y doan'cher tyke out a summons agyainst this 'ere *stove*?

EXPERIENCED WRITER TO LITERARY ASPIRANT: Yes, dear old boy; once you've got the water to light, it's an easy matter to set the Thames on fire.

FIRST COMEDIAN: Did you score a hit with your new speciality?

SECOND COMEDIAN: Did I? Why, the audience gazed in open-mouthed wonder before I was half through.

FIRST COMEDIAN: What a strange coincidence! It is seldom that an entire audience yawns at once.

"PAPA, do Frenchmen ever make speeches?"

"Certainly, my dear; why shouldn't they?"

"Well, I should think they would have to stop every two or three words to remember whether the word they wanted to use was masculine or feminine."

WIDOW VISITOR (to old friend who is dying): Now, Mary, when you goes to 'eaven, will ye tell my John that I'm a-longing to be with him?

DYING FRIEND: Well, if I sees your John, I'll tell un; but if I doan't, I bain't a-going clickety clack all over 'eaven arter 'e.

"So they are going to name the baby after its father?"

"Yes; they have no rich relatives, and his wife doesn't read novels."

OF COURSE NOT!

FRIEND OF THE FAMILY: Why aren't you two children at school to-day? Have you broken up for the holidays?

SUSIE: No. Jacky's got bronchitis, and I've got such a cold in my head I can't go.

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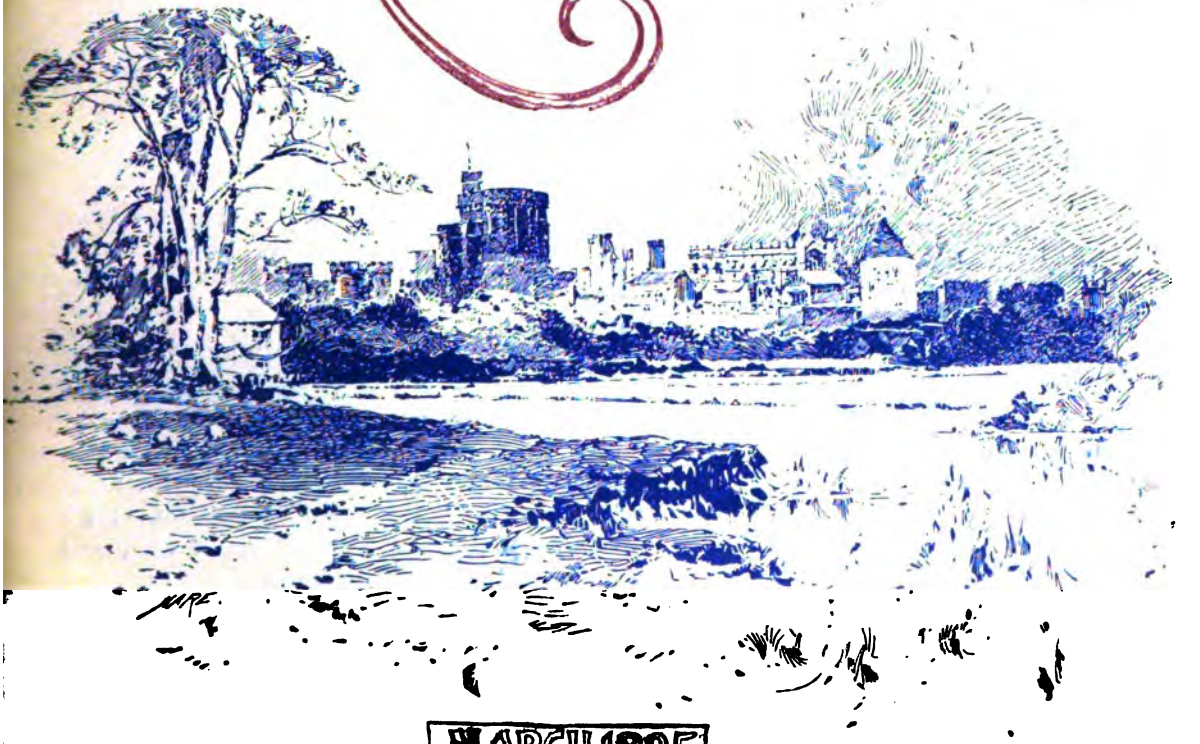
P415.6

"AYESHA," By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

"IF YOUTH BUT KNEW,"
By AGNES & EGERTON CASTLE.

THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE



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No. 123

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The Windsor Magazine.

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A BACCHANTE.

FROM THE PICTURE BY LORD LEIGHTON.

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"THERE'S A FOX IN THE SPINNEY, THEY SAY." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

A PAINTER OF ANIMAL LIFE

MR. W. FRANK CALDERON AND HIS WORK.

BY JOHN OLDCASTLE.

"LEARN to draw an animal, and you will never be unkind to one," was the advice discerningly given by an English father to his boy. The wonders of anatomy are nearly as great in an animal as they are in a man; albeit a certain drama of anatomy belongs to man alone, and answers to "the many movements of his mind." Wanton abuse of a live mechanism so marvellous seemed a moral impossibility to the modern parent, whose letters to his son were very different in their temper from, say, Lord Chesterfield's. Such a formula may, of course, be pressed too far; but it is a general truth that painting has created an understanding between man and beast. What Dickens did for the suburban child, Landseer did for the puppy. Mr. W. Frank Calderon to-day repeats the lesson of compassion—a lesson that endears the art of the animal-painter to people little initiated in the doctrines of this, that, or the other school of paint.

Boys are apt to be imitative in their first ideas of the profession they follow; and this instinct of theirs receives the sanction of the hereditary succession that is often secured by law. The son of a king, asked in the nursery what he will be, replies: "A king," and the State itself ratifies his choice. The son of a painter, similarly questioned, replies: "A painter," because he does not know that in the arts the hereditary principle fails; and that the number of famous artist fathers, with famous artist sons, can be counted upon the fingers of one hand. Since the strange case of Fra Fillippo Lippi, no descent of the sort is equally illustrious;

though we have Holbein the elder and Holbein the younger, Tiepolo the elder and Tiepolo the younger, to call in minor witness. In modern England, however, Academicians have bred Academicians—past, present, or to come. Leslie has a double entry on the lists at Burlington House; so has Richmond; so has Stone. There is a Young Hunter, true to his name; and Mr. W. Frank Calderon is himself the son of an Academic father. In choice of subject there has not been a descent from sire to son. The limner of "Sighing his Soul into his Lady's Face," and of the so much contested and now name-changed "Renunciation," has been succeeded by the artist of "Coursing" and the "Cattle Fair."

"THE JOLLY HUNTSMAN." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

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At the University School, Gower Street, this young painter of animals got the Trevelyan Goodall Scholarship, and thereupon entered the Slade School under M. Legros—a great draughtsman, whose old pupils have every right to declare that draughtsmanship is the painter's grammar. Perhaps Mr. Calderon thus learned not only how to practise his art, but also that other lesson, so useful to his future—how to teach it. Among his contemporaries at the Slade were Tuke, Gotch, Jacomb Hood, Chevallier Tayler, Sir Charles Holroyd, Strang, and the long-to-be-lamented Charles Furse, cut off before he had well crossed the threshold of a great career. English youth is not very susceptible—at least in the matter of art tradition; and though the genius of Legros could not fail of an influence, in varying degrees, on all these students, most of all on Mr. Strang, it did not shape the artistic outlook then taken and since maintained by Mr. Calderon. He continued to be himself. What he took from Legros was this sense of the importance of draughtsmanship, an equipment, one would say, in itself. His admiration for his Old Master is still with him; and, talking of the admirations by which the young artist "lives," as Wordsworth well said, Mr. Calderon is at the feet of Troyon; and among his contemporary countrymen he singles—or doubles—out Arnesby Brown and Arthur Lemon. We hear now and then of the art-critic of the tailors' paper who walks through the Academy with an eye open only to the cut of the clothes in the portraits; and Mr. Calderon confesses to a developed critical instinct about the anatomy of animals. Some equestrian portraits,

"COURSING." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

"DANTE IN THE VALLEY OF TERRORS." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

great in their general effect, offered weak points to this observing eye, trained in all the technicalities of muscle, tendon, and bone. Most figure-painters who deal with animals humanise the animal. The eye of man, for instance, is on a front plane of face, but the eye of most animals is partially on a side plane—round the corner. But not so is it rendered by many a hand accustomed most of all to human sitters. This is one of the paradoxes of daily nature and habit—that the organ of observation is itself but carelessly observed. An essayist who said not long ago that all pupils of eyes are similar

"FLOOD." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

in size, and that the eyelid alone makes the large eye or the small, was at first heard with a murmur of incredulity. Around no question does controversy rage more hotly than it does about the colour of the eyes of absent friends or of dead heroes. A woman's eyes might be held more noticeable than a man's, but what was the colour of Charlotte Brontë's? Reddish hazel, says the careful Mrs. Gaskell. Grey, says Matthew Arnold —an examiner by profession. Coleridge's eyes were brown, according to Carlyle; but a well-known line of poetry immortalises them as grey. Rossetti's eyes have been given "by the inattention of his friends" nearly as many colours as his own palette contained. The placing of eyes stands equal chances of unveracity; it is a study in itself, and it is a suggestive study of which Mr. Calderon has made himself master.

"My hobby-horse anatomy," Mr. Calderon says; and you can play with the

"THE COMING SHOWER." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

"THE CREST OF THE HILL." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

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"THE CATTLE FAIR AT REIGATE." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.
From the original drawing in the collection of Mr. A. E. Street.

hyphen, placing it between hobby and horse, or between horse and anatomy. Anatomy is his hobby-horse—an excellent one to ride; and his hobby his horse-anatomy. His special love of the structure of the horse is displayed in such works as "The Grey Mare." A sporting paper criticised the mare's

"PORTRAIT OF SIR THOMAS MEYRICK, BART., C.B." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

crest, but Mr. Calderon knew; his detail was as correct as the action of the legs of the horse in Lady Butler's "The Roll Call," contested in the columns of the *Times*, and verified by instantaneous photography. The critics in both cases, and very literally in Mr. Calderon's, went away "crestfallen." It is a mystery to Mr. Calderon why even the horsey man is contented with the most conventional, but most unobserved, rendering upon canvas of his favourite charger or hunter. "Eyes or no eyes" has been the burden of nursery homilies for successive generations of Englishmen; but they have still to be taught to see. "I see," is the favourite profession of the boy; but that is just what he fails to do; and it is an awkward miss for him, whether in the picture-gallery or on the South African veldt. Surgeons and artists have much anatomical ground in common; and it is worth mentioning that Mr. Hugh W. Armstead, M.D., F.R.C.S., author of "The Artistic Anatomy of the Horse," is a brother-in-law of Mr. Calderon. Another treatise of nearly the same name, which he has studied line by line, is that written of old by George Stubbs; and this reminds one of the horse painted by this same George Stubbs (who was elected an R.A. and would not accept the letters), which is sometimes spoken of as the favourite picture of Sir Edward Poynter in the National Gallery.

In nearly all families there is a supernumerary, who is, however, anything but superfluous—the family friend, the contemporary of the parents, but the devoted ally, playmate, and patron of the children. The dear man—luckless is the hearth that lacks him! Just such a friend was Mr. Schwabe, who first "commissioned" Mr. Frank Calderon. "Paint me a picture for a thousand——

"RIVALS." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

farthings," was his injunction to the boy, who enjoyed as much as anyone the tantalising pause between the number and the coin. A year later, and the denomination was raised to halfpennies, and it went on being doubled as the years advanced. Two other lifelong friends are to be named—Mr. Briton Riviere, R.A., and Mr. Davis, R.A. Encouraged in his efforts by his family and his friends, Frank Calderon was only sixteen when, in the early 'eighties of the last century, he became an exhibitor in

the Royal Academy to good purpose indeed, for Queen Victoria bought the picture, a boy feeding puppies; and a charming letter from Leighton completed the triumph. Never once rejected, he has been seen at Burlington House, May after May, ever since. Some of these pictures hang beside his father's in the gallery at Hamburg that contains the canvases belonging to the Schwabe bequest—the bequest of the early and generous buyer. Other distant homes his pictures have found. The National Gallery at Brisbane holds "The Crest of the Hill," and, whether it is that distance lends

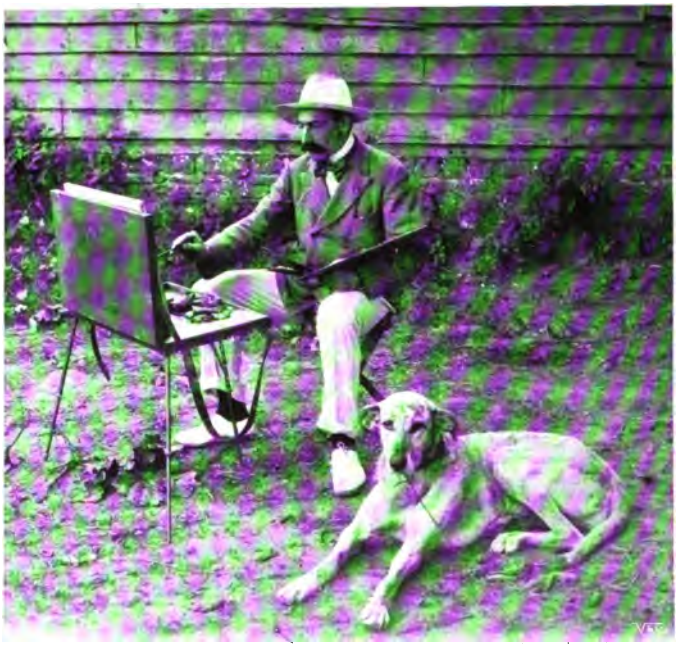

Photo by [*F. Coze, Midhurst.*

MR. CALDERON AT WORK.

enchantment to the view, the artist is inclined to regard this as his masterpiece. Five horses have drawn to the hill-top as many a noble tree-torso; the summit is all but gained, and the last crack of the whip is given more by way of encouragement than by way of menace.

Mr. Calderon possesses many casts of the muscles of animals; and visitors to his studio and School sometimes exclaim against the pain of the animal which must in this particular be the price of the artist's tuition. Such casts are, however, taken after the death of the sentient creature; and the rule holds good, in Mr. Calderon's case, that the animal he draws he also respects. Burning questions about vivisection when addressed to him have the most moderate replies; under strict conditions he will cede to the surgeon the right which even the sentimentalist allows to the butcher under conditions which, as everybody knows, cry to Heaven for revision and regulation. As sitters, animals are, perhaps, happier than human creatures. The horse, which has so much "go" in the painting just mentioned, is a quiescent enough beast; it seems almost as natural to him to sit as to be sat upon. Dogs, too, appear to recognise Mr. Calderon's palette as soon as it is produced; they do not look self-conscious like the human sitter; but they know that they are to repose, if not to pose. The "shilling-an-hour victim" is not to be sought for in the dumb creation; for as soon as an animal, sitting to Mr. Calderon, begins to be restless, the painter gives him rein, so to say, and makes a break in the sitting. A horse or a dog is too honest to counterfeit action; he must really do what he is doing; hence the impossibility of his posing with dramatic simulation. Little artifices may attend him, but they are not of his devising; such, for instance, as that once shown in an amusing drawing of a horse in a studio whose tail was put into the movement of flight by the aid of a pair of bellows. Mr. Calderon, by the way, has himself contributed drawings in and to *Black and White*.

Not all Mr. Calderon's sitters have sat to him in the conventional sense of the term. The artist has gone forth to his subject: he has found his way to the fair, has made his rough notes in colour, and charged his memory with expressions and gestures which, the day after the fair, he can place in due relation upon canvas. The men of "The Cattle Fair" at Reigate have probably never been inside a studio; they are natives whose expertness does not take the form of exactitude in the arts; and they do their business on a day that, in its uninviting bleakness, makes the business all the more instant. So

"PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

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"THE BLUE HUSSAR." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

much is conveyed, and skilfully conveyed, by Mr. Calderon. In "The Coming Shower" the artist lets you into the secret that the cattle are in the secret of the clouds. They betray the weather-lore which is theirs—a sense of discomfort not unakin, one fancies, to that of the silk-hatted man caught umbrellaless in a shower. Even the cow seems to feel just the least bit ridiculous in the rain with no sheltering shed at hand; and if one is not sorry for the hapless man, one is sorry for the cow—the beneficent cow of Stevenson's verse—

> The gentle cow, all red and white,
> I love with all my heart;
> She makes me cream with all her might,
> To eat with apple tart.

Greater stress of weather, with greater answering distress in the animal, is depicted by Mr. Calderon in "The Flood." Bewildered and affrighted, the cattle and horses stand on the surely lessening island,

"PASSIVE RESISTANCE." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

"GELERT." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

"A SON OF THE EMPIRE." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

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"HOMEWARDS." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.
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looking, as if with some concerted hope, in a common direction. The bull bellows in distress, and the lighting of the landscape intensifies the menace of the piece.

In "Gelert" the artist has commemorated the tale which sets all childhood on the side of the dog.

> The gallant hound the wolf did slay,
> To save Llewellyn's heir;

yet was himself slain by the momentary misunderstanding of the saved child's father. Very different dogs are to be seen in the picture called "Coursing," chiefly notable for its excellent character-study, a study which extends to the very clothes of the bystanders. The intent expression is, of its sort, as good as is the conscious dignity that stamps the features and almost moulds the form of "The Blue Hussar." You note in "Homewards" a skilful arrangement, the "pattern" of the Whistlerian vocabulary; in "Iping Hammer" a study of pure landscape; in "There's a fox in the Spinney, they say," a landscape alive with dogs whose sense of "scent" is alertly presented; and in "Passive Resistance" a display of dog nature all the more admirable because it does not trust for its effect to any of that adventitious human expression which Sir Edwin himself often imported into the faces of beasts. The dogs of Mr. Calderon are—dogs!

"ORPHANS." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.
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Ten years ago the School of Animal Painting in Baker Street was started; and there Mr. Calderon teaches what Mr. Calderon knows. The School is unique; for no otherwhere in London, nor yet in any other capital, is a similar opportunity presented to the student in this department of art. Busy Baker Street, with its hang-dog horses, is forgotten by him who enters the studio in which a dog or a horse is the "sitter," and where accommodation for fifty students of either sex is amply provided. Thoroughbreds, polo-ponies, hunters, cart-horses, chargers—all the equine varieties are here engaged in the peaceful labour of posing. It is a new world and, in its way, an amusing one. Occasionally a figure model mounts the live horse; occasionally a dummy horse, designed by Mr. Calderon. Cats are conspicuous by their absence, perhaps because they can be drawn at home. Sleeping dogs lie about the studio for the chance sketches made from them during the breaks in other sittings.

"If you can paint a horse or a cow, you may safely take a commission to paint a rhinoceros," says the enthusiast; "and the man who can paint a dog or a cat is nearly prepared to paint a lion or a tiger." All the same, Mr. Calderon encourages his students to frequent the Zoological Gardens, and to bring back their drawings for his supervision, his correction, perhaps his praise.

Mr. Briton Riviere and Mr. Gow are among the visitors to the School, which itself flits to the country in the summer. The upper room, full of casts of animals, is left behind; the voice of Dr. Armstead at his weekly lecture on anatomy is stilled; and the busy and ambitious workers are transferred to Headley Mill Farm, three miles from Liphook. Cows, donkeys, goats, are pressed into service; and the delights of the Summer School are such that well-known artists often escape from the fever and fret of town to sketch sylvan beauty and the beast.

"JOHN ARKWRIGHT, ESQ." BY W. FRANK CALDERON.

IF YOUTH BUT KNEW.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

IV.—THE MELODY IN THE VIOLETS.

THE Burgravine Betty had a curious glitter in those eyes of hers, that generally astonished the stranger by their soft flower-blue in her olive face. Upon cheeks usually colourless she wore a dark flush, yet, withal, she was full of smiles: was it not the wedding morning of the little Baroness Sidonia, her husband's niece?

The old Burg of Wellenshausen, on the top of the crag, had been in a mighty bustle these three days; for singular circumstances, and the bridegroom's unwavering determination—he was in a position to dictate terms and did dictate them—had hurried the date of the ceremony in unprecedented fashion. His desire to see the last of his uncanny host, and to be free from the prying and challenging eyes of his hostess, was second only to the yearning for the dear solitude *à deux* with his young bride.

Had the neighbours of the Burgrave of Wellenshausen been available (and the heads of the few great houses of the environs were at the Court of Jerome, making merry, regardless of universal war and of brewing sedition), they could hardly have been invited on such scant notice. And yet it was the greatest heiress of the country that was to be married this day; and the man she was to wed, a young Austrian, Graf von Waldorf-Kilmansegg—kinsman of the Burgravine—was no whit her inferior in blood, looks, or purse. For so hasty a union, it was a marvellously fitting one: and the ceremony in the little stone chapel nestling under the frowning walls of the Burg was, if ungraced by guests, charming in its simplicity and earnestness. The bridegroom looked manly and enamoured; the bride was sweet in childish dignity, with a certain dainty composure. The Burgrave looked the "noble father" to the last detail, and shed tears in his moustache, whereat the Burgravine's eyes glittered with a more steely flash than ever.

At breakfast, later, all went with the same smoothness; and, if there was an indecorous absence of response displayed by the young couple, as well as by the gracious mistress of the Castle, when the enthusiastic toasts were proposed (and deeply drunk) by the Burgrave, none could complain of the quality of the glances exchanged by the bride and the bridegroom over their perfunctory libations. As for the Burgravine Betty, she well-nigh matched her lord in tossing the Sillery down her delicate throat.

Yet was she in a strange hurry to get the little new Countess Kilmansegg away from the feast into the privacy of her own turret apartment, ostensibly to robe her for the journey. The bridegroom followed his bride with a long, deep glance; which catching, the Burgravine Betty tossed her head.

Once alone with the girl, she whisked the bridal veil from the yellow head with such feverish and ungentle hands that Sidonia turned round to look upon her in amaze—only to meet a positive glare from the blue eyes.

"Why, Aunt Betty!"

"Why, Sidonia!—forgive, I should say Most High Lady Countess!"

"Have I done anything?" stammered the child, forgetful of her new dignity. "Have I vexed you?" Her young heart was overflowing with tenderness: she fain would part tenderly from all she had known of home.

"Vexed?—I?" quoth the lady.

Here they were interrupted by a frightened-looking tirewoman, whom the Burgravine drove away with actual fierceness.

"I will myself attend to the Countess. Get you gone! Nay, my love," proceeded she, once more addressing her niece, and in a biting tone of sweetness, "wherefore should I be vexed? I may be ashamed for my sex; I am still (I must confess) under the shock of the recent scandal, which has rendered necessary this humiliating marriage, but——"

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"In Heaven's name!" interrupted the bride, "what is this?" She removed the myrtle wreath with steady fingers from her fair tresses, and then approached with a countenance singularly altered and aged. "You must tell me what you mean, Aunt Betty," she said.

"Were you as innocent as you pretend," retorted the Burgravine, now fairly panting, "it were no kindness to you, child, to let you depart in ignorance of the truth. But you can scarce be blind to the fact that the poor young man below has but wedded you to save your name, your honour."

Sidonia went white to the lips. "I don't understand . . . . ." she faltered. But there was a great horror gathering in her eyes.

"Do you need to be told, then," cried the other, clapping her plump hands together in exasperation, "that if a young girl spends a night in a cave alone with a young man, her reputation is not worth a silver groat?"

The blood raced back to the bride's cheeks.

"Do you taunt me for having saved your life, Aunt Betty? What say I?—saved *your* reputation! . . . . Nay, I'll not believe you; my husband is not made of such false stuff. He has told me he loves me, he has my faith."

The Burgravine broke into shrill laughter; then, with a sudden change of mood, she folded her niece to her heart hysterically.

"Nay, my poor lamb, I have been hard with you! Go, go in your touching confidence; I will say no further word. It would be cruel to enlighten you a day sooner than necessary."

The new Countess showed more passion upon this display of affection than she had been moved to by the former gibing. She caught the Burgravine's wrists with little hands of steel.

"Now speak your meaning . . . you shall speak, Aunt Betty!"

"Never!" declared the Burgravine; and in the same breath shrieked and vowed she must give way before such intolerable violence. Then, rubbing one dimpled wrist after another, she whimpered that her heart was broken. "Ungrateful child!" she sobbed; "have I not sacrificed myself to you? A—ah, he has vowed that he loves you——" (It is well to lash oneself into passion when it is hard to strike in cold blood.) "Four days ago, on that very turret platform," she dramatically pointed to the gloomy silhouette of the east tower through the deep lancet window, "only four days ago he held me to his heart—this devoted husband of yours—and consecrated his life to me!"

"I do not believe you," said Sidonia again. But her soft, young face seemed suddenly turned to marble.

"Fool!" shrieked the Burgravine; drew a crumpled billet from her bosom and spread it out before the bride's eyes. "See here, he writes to me—asks me to meet him among the ruins. Read the words: 'All will be ready.' . . . What do they mean, think you? Why, that his coach was waiting below to whirl us to our own land, to safety, to happiness!"

"Then why did you not go? Why did you send me?" asked Sidonia stonily.

"Because I was a fool!" cried the Burgravine; and set her little teeth upon such savage accents of truth that at last Sidonia believed. She took the crumpled bit of paper from her aunt's shaking hands. Her own shook not at all.

"It is well," she said. "Go you and send him to me. I know now what I have to do." And she thrust the note into the bosom of her bridal frock.

To be thoroughly successful in revenge is always slightly alarming. So thought the Burgravine Betty, as she closed the door upon this unknown, this strange Sidonia. But, having gone too far to retreat, spite resolved to reap the final gratification.

* * * * *

The bridegroom entered with reverent yet eager joy; then, upon sight of his bride, checked his advance—all amazement.

Sidonia sat in a high-backed chair as on a judgment-seat, with face coldly set, yet with eyes blazing unconscious reproach.

"I sent for you, Monsieur de Kilmansegg," she said, with great distinctness of enunciation, "to tell you that I decline to go away with you."

Whither had fled the crystal music of her voice? He had an irritable pride and passionate blood; and withal a brain that was not apt at swift intuition.

"I do not understand," he said, even as she but a few minutes ago, and his tone was that of anger. Perhaps she had expected another attitude—had pictured him, poor child! crying in despair at her feet. Her wounded dignity was reinforced by a revulsion of unknown feelings which suddenly turned almost to hatred. She would not stoop to explain, still less to complain.

"It is sufficient that you should understand that now we part; I do not go with you. Go you and forget me!'

"'I don't understand . . .' she faltered."

"Sidonia!" he ejaculated helplessly. He stood staring at her. Then a horrible suspicion sprang upon him. Was it possible this young creature had but played a part with him? Had she feigned sweet maiden love and wedded him, virginally tender, but to save the threatened honour of her name? Nay, more monstrous thought still, was the whole business a hideous conspiracy? And he was shaken with a sudden fury; a crimson tide rushed to his face. In two strides he was beside her, menacingly bending over her.

"You are my wife!" he cried. "You are mine—mine! You belong to me! You must do as I order—as I please!"

His look filled her with new, unknown terrors. Child-woman, she shrank instinctively from something to her nameless, yet infinitely offending. Clasping her hands upon her breast to still the throbbing of her heart, she heard, beneath her fingers, the whisper of Aunt Betty's treacherous billet.

Stung into fresh disdain, she reared her head and measured him with her glance. Baroness Sidonia was not the daughter of a fierce and antique race for nothing.

"You can take my money if you will, all my money—and I am very rich, they tell me—so that you only go. Go!"

As if her little sunburnt hand had struck him a deadly blow, Steven Lee, Count von Waldorf-Kilmansegg, stepped back a couple

of paces; and the hot young blood, ebbing from his face, left it grey.

He paused for a while; then made a bow, turned on his heel, and went to the door. On the threshold he looked back at her for a second; it was a farewell look, and bore in it a pride as high and bleeding as her own, a reproach as keen. She saw that his lip trembled. Then the door was closed, very gently, between them, and she heard his steps die away down the winding stone stairs.

She glanced at her new wedding-ring and thought her heart must break; but yet she sat and made no effort to recall him.

* * * * *

It was a day of scurrying breezes and dappled skies. Long pools reflected blue and white in the ruts of His Majesty King Jerome of Westphalia's neglected roads. Wide and deep ruts they were—tracks of the "Grand Army" that had been—and even a village child could have told that great guns and wagons had passed that way before the sweeping by of the last spring storm.

But the rider, on his big-boned, iron-grey horse, splashed through the mud at reckless speed; and if he had had a thought for the testimony of the road, would not have understood it.

A stranger to the land—English by education, by inheritance head of a great Austrian house—he had gone on his travels to train his youthful mind in the study of the tangled politics of nations, as became one entitled by birth to take place some day among the legislators of his country. And, behold! Fate had laid a trap for his unwary heart, and he had fallen.

A man may wrench himself free of love's snare as the wild thing of the woods from the teeth of the springe; but at what vital hurt, how maimed, how bruised, how deeply marked! What was it to Steven Lee, Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg, that the west wind, dashing against his face, was balmy with the breath of the black pinewoods on the rising slopes to his right; that the rank meadows that fell away to the left were colour alive, gold-green in the sunlight; that shadows swept across them like spirit messages? His ears were deaf to the organ chant of the pines, to the shrill joy of the lark, echoing back from the blue vault. Unmoved, he trotted through the poverty-stricken villages, by the deserted homesteads, once flourishing, beside the wasted cornfields. One whom life was treating as evilly as himself could not be expected to bestow even the alms of pitying thought to the peasant soldiers, stiff in the snows of Russia, or plodding vanquished in Spanish rocky deserts, nor to the starving families to whom the breadwinner would never return. He did not even know whither he was hurrying, so long as he crossed the nearest frontier of a country to him accursed. To this all the passion of his mind was bent.

* * * * *

With head bent towards the wind, and fiddle slung on his shoulder, a wandering musician was breasting the hill where the high imperial road skirting the Thuringian forest bends towards that fertile valley watered by the Fulda. Even the hard sinews of the grey steed faltered before the steepness of the ascent. The mounted traveller had to curb his impatience to suit his steed, and found himself level with the humble wayfarer at a pace that forced progression side by side. Yet, on the instant he had recognised him and fain would have passed at highest speed. Certes, it seemed hard, that in this wide, empty country, upon the solitary road, he should stumble upon the one man whom he would of all others avoid; the man who had had of late so much influence—he now thought for disaster—upon his life.

These were days when it seemed Fortune turned her wheel in freakish humour, precipitating the mighty, exalting the base-born. What private tragedy had met this vagrant musician in the midst of universal cataclysm? Those who knew him as a wanderer upon high roads, dependent for his bread on the favour that his fiddle found, could only speculate. But his manner was that of one to whom command comes naturally, his temper that of the scholar and the philosopher; he had a singular power over those whom he chose to frequent. To rich and poor he was alike welcome, but no one knew his secret.

Steven, whom Fate seemed freakishly to throw across this strange creature's path, had more than once suffered himself to be led by him, and now, in humiliation and soreness of heart, accused him secretly of evil counsel.

Fiddle-Hans—for so the wanderer was known in the countryside — started as he beheld the young face looking down at him from over the horseman's cloak.

"You?" he exclaimed.

"I!" said Steven.

The man on foot halted, and he on horseback unconsciously reined in. The two remained staring at each other, and in the eyes of both was hot reproach.

"And whither set you off alone, bridegroom, on your grey horse?" asked the musician at length, in that tone of irony under which he hid most of emotions.

"Anywhere," answered the bridegroom with a pale smile, "so long as I put space between myself and my bride."

Fiddle-Hans drew his brows together into a dark frown. His nostrils dilated, the corners of his mouth twitched.

"*Peste!*" said he under his voice. Then: "Is it not a little premature? The ceremony took place this morning, I believe. I think I heard the joy-bells from the distance. Had it been a few months later —but now——"

His tone was cynical, but his eye was stern and anxious, and his weather-beaten face looked suddenly old and drawn.

"Months?" echoed the rider with a bitter laugh. "It took her but the measure of minutes to decide on my worth."

"Her?" commented Fiddle-Hans with inquiring emphasis.

"Did you think," answered Steven—and though he strove to be cool, the passion of his wrath wrote itself on every line of his usually impassive face and vibrated in his voice like the first mutterings of thunder—"did you think I went through the marriage ceremony for the pure amusement of making a nine days' scandal and deserting my hour-old wife? That would have been a brilliant joke indeed! No, my friend; the situation is of her making. She took her woman's privilege and changed her mind."

"She was a child yesterday," said Fiddle-Hans.

There was pain in Steven's smile as he returned:

"She was no child this morning."

"But, Heavens!" cried the other impatiently, "even so. Did she play the woman, was it not the more reason for you to play the man? You left her, you left her . . . . is it possible? For a few sharp words, some vulgar misunderstanding! Why, she was yours, man; and you should have carried her with you, were it on the crupper of that high-boned grey."

"Aye," replied Steven. "Even so, as you say. It also dawned upon me, deficient as I am in wits, that the time had come for me to play the man. I actually announced my intention of carrying her away with me by main force—not on the grey, but in the coach prepared for our bridal journey. She reminded me that I took her fortune with her."

"Ah, bah!" said the fiddler, and winced as if he had been struck.

"It seems she is an heiress," said the bridegroom's voice over his head. "She offered me half her fortune—her whole fortune—if I would go without her! Hey! what answer would you have a man make to that? I got the first saddle-horse to be had for money and rode away, leaving her my carriage and horses and my servant —for a Countess Waldorf-Kilmansegg must have her equipage. That episode is closed!" The rider chucked his reins and set the rested horse to his labour up the hill once more.

Fiddle-Hans had been looking down at the stones at his feet; he now roused himself and, bending his head, like a man under the blast of a storm, fell into pace beside the grey. His shoulders were rounded as beneath a burden, yet it was evident that Fate had played him too many scurvy tricks for him to be astonished. After a while he laid his hand upon the dappled neck and looked up at the rider.

"These women," he said, "these children —they insult a man because they do not understand. Mischief has been made here —mischief is always alert when marriage-bells are ringing. Go back to her!"

"I?" cried Steven Lee.

"Go back to her!" said the tramping fiddler again, as he trudged the stony way beside the young lord riding. "Be generous——"

Steven laughed out loud; and the fiddler knew that the wound had gone deeper even than he suspected.

"I am for Vienna," said the bridegroom briefly; "but I shall make fit settlements upon her, never fear, and such provisions as may safeguard her honour and my own."

"Nay, comrade," interrupted the other, looking up keenly, "such a union as yours —why, 'twould be the easiest contract to annul that ever two young fools repented of."

Steven's hands contracted over the leather.

"Do you think so?" said he, and grew darkly crimson. "O, of course," he said, and laughed, "that would be much the best. Aha! Annul! Well, she has only to wish it."

The musician, observing him, showed now a lighter countenance and presently smiled

to himself. Then he shifted his instrument from his back to his breast and began to twang the strings, as if in deep reflection.

"We shall part at the top of the hill," said the rider.

"Shall we?" said the wayfarer. "I think not. Listen, my lord."

The rousing spring wind brought indeed a strange distant rumour on its wings, and the fiddler imposed silence on his restless fingers and stood still himself, leaning his ear.

Once more Steven arrested the grey's climb. There is nothing so infectious as the curiosity of the ear. The flapping breeze fell as they halted; and then the sounds which it had brought to them over the crest of the knoll seemed to be repeated with much greater distinctness from the vale in their rear.

"What is it?" asked the horseman.

It was a sound like the beat of giant storm-rain upon forest leaves, only that it was measured at repeated intervals by rhythmic jingle and clink. Even as he spoke, Steven heard a crisp drumming of hoofs separate itself from the stream of confused sound: then, upon the ring of two words in a commanding voice, the thunder-wave of advance broke itself into silence, in the midst of which silence suddenly pattered a succession of cracking shots close on one another, as beads dropping from a string.

"Stand back!" cried the fiddler. And, suiting the action to the word, he seized the grey by the bit and forced it backwards into the ditch that girt the road on the side of the fields.

"But what is it?" asked Steven once more, as the clamour within the woods rose again in confusion, a hideous medley of human voices wrangling like angry beasts, of plunging and neighing of horses, crackling of boughs, and thud of iron hoofs. The fiddler dilated his nostrils. He stood leaning back against the flank of the grey, his right hand still firmly on the bit. A fine blue vapour, a pungent smell was oozing between the dark firs.

"Have you never smelt it before, you innocent?" said he, looking up at the rider, and his sunburnt face was kindled by stern fires. "Yet there's scarce a square rood of Europe these twelve years that has not known the smoke of this holocaust. It is Battle, man!"

"She glanced at her new wedding-ring and thought her heart must break; but yet she sat and made no effort to recall him."

The words were still on his lips when the placid front of the forest before them was suddenly shaken and pierced in a hundred places. Red-coated hussars with flying blue dolmans—bareheaded most, but some with huge shako and plume at a dishevelled angle—broke covert along the whole line, crashing

through the underwood, leaping, it seemed, one upon the other, each man inclining in his saddle and wildly spurring towards the downward slope at a tearing gallop.

Steven's grey shivered under him. It had, no doubt, in its youth been a charger; certainly it was now seized with martial ardour. Flinging up its head fiercely to shake off the fiddler's grip, it displayed such a strong intention to join in the race—which no doubt it conceived to be a glorious charge—that a less practised rider would have found it hard to keep the saddle.

As it was, Steven could gather but a confused impression of the flying troop as it thundered past — a whirl — bucketing, straining, pumping, clanking, splashing; of men's faces, crimson, distorted, open-mouthed; of bridles slavered with blood and foam; of craning horses' necks, and nostrils afire!

Fiddle-Hans gave a loud laugh.

"The most gallant the Hussars of the Guard of His Majesty Jerome the First, and last—in full rout! And, O shadows of Moscow! here come the pursuers!"

The forest was now alive with hoarse, guttural cries, as if the wooded depths had suddenly released some giant brood of ravens. And then, helter-skelter, even as the last belated hussar, blood streaming from a black gash in his forehead, clattered heavily rearmost of his comrades, reins loose, clinging to the saddle—they came! Huns! Squat riders on squat horses—cattle and man shaggy and unkempt one as the other—with long tags of matted hair bobbing round wild-bearded faces, pointed fur caps drawn down to the eyes, sheepskin-clad knees drawn up almost to the chin, stirruped with rope, brandishing rough spears; miscellaneous booty—a goose, a sucking-pig, a frying-pan, maybe a cottage clock—swinging at the saddlebow. They came, shouting their crow-call, exulting, squealing, grunting! they came, filled the road with clamour and clatter and stench .... and were gone before Steven could draw—it seemed to him — the full breath of his amazement!

Like the second gust of the hurricane, they had gathered and broken by them and were past, the clamour of their tempest way rising loud, then growing suddenly faint in the distance, as the valley received them.

"Now," said Fiddle-Hans, looking up, "here is an experience for your English-bred youth. Fate has annihilated the centuries, you have beheld the passage of the Barbarians. Pouah!—what a wild-beast trail they have left behind them! To think that Napoleon should have gone to seek these wolves and jackals in their steppes, and spread the Cossack over the face of Europe!"

He sprang out of the ditch, and the grey, much injured in feeling, snorting and sullenly upheaving its haunches, was induced to follow. A roll of far-off musketry crepitated up to them from the plain. "Do you hear?" said Fiddle-Hans. "And do you know what that means?"

"They are fighting on the other side of the hill," said Stephen, spurring towards the crest.

"'Tis the Empire cracking," said the musician, running alongside, his hand at the stirrup-leather. "These are the little cracks by which the little House of Westphalia is doomed to fall, as the cottage falls on the hillside from the earthquake that has wrecked the city. It is the back-wave from Moscow which assails us here to-day."

They had halted on the crest, and their gaze plunged into the open valley which lay outstretched in the sunshine. A canopy of blue smoke hung over the fields that spread between their knoll and little town, some half-mile distant. The mist was pierced with slow-moving lines of bayonets which flashed back the sunshine; traversed with colour—on the one side the greens and reds and greys of marching companies, and on the other, solid masses of dark blue.

Fiddle-Hans ran a knowing eye over the scene. "Aha! The Prussians hold the town," said he. "Contrast their sober uniform with Jerome's scarlets and greens, his plumes and gold lace. Ah! there go our runaways! They have found their support. See them draw up behind yonder crimson platoon—our little brother Jerome's Grenadiers of the Guard, for he must ape big brother Napoleon and his Old Guard! Look, look, our friends the Cossacks roll together like a swarm of hornets at the foot of the hill; they find themselves cut off from their Prussian allies—and if the Hussars but rally in time, we shall see the *rôles* of the drama reversed in a minute!"

He fell abruptly silent: something had flown between his head and Steven's as the latter bent towards him from his saddle to listen and to look—something that droned a strange song as it passed, and puffed a cold breath on their cheeks.

"What was that?" asked Steven, looking round.

"That was a stray Death," said the musician placidly. "What say you—shall we seek cover?"

"Let us see the thing out!" cried Steven; the fire of a fighting race was in his eye.

"There will be more lead flying," said Fiddle-Hans, glancing up with an odd expression. "Death flies on a capricious wing when this sort of game is played."

"Why, then," answered the bridegroom with his smile of bitterness, "that might be the simplest solution of all to my difficulty; at least I should not be deeply mourned."

"If that be your mind towards bullets," said the fiddler, with a shadow of sarcasm, "for once your youth and my age are in harmony. But what if you were to tie your grey behind some forest trees? There is no need of offering him up also to our altar of despair—and he might be of use when the day is over."

Steven admitted the suggestion without a word; and presently both men sat upon a high bank, their legs dangling into space.

"This is inspiring," said the fiddler. He unslung his instrument. "Did you hear that volley? Those are troops trained under Bonaparte, I'll wager my fiddle-bow. Hear how the Prussian insurgents respond. (Peasants, students; deserters from Jerome—the Patriots, in short!) See those puffs of white smoke, in and out of the line under the village wall? Not a gun together—loose shooting, but good hatred; I'll back it in the long run! Drums! shouts!—'tis the bayonet charge; what did I tell you? Here come our Huns back again . . . what's left of them. I am inspired! Hark you: this is the song of the fight . . . First come the Grenadiers, cool and scornful, musket on breast, arms folded; they march like one man. '*I have served under the Eagle; I have been of the Guard of the Great Emperor. To Moscow I have been—and back: to-day it is sunshine: it is child's play, but I would rather be back in the ice with my Emperor. To me he is the Little Corporal: I am one of the old lot. It is I and mine who put the crown on his head. To Jena we went singing:—*

"'*We'll go and bring a kingdom home*
To give little brother Jerome.

He said little brother should have a little kingdom of his own—what is this rabble that would undo his work? It was warm work at Jena, comrade—O, and it was cold at Moscow!' . . . '*Aim at the Old Guard, kerls,*' *says the Prussian to his volunteer gunners.* '*Hurl down the Guard, and the field is ours.*' . . . *Hurl down the Guard, aha!*

"'*I have to come out to fight for the Fatherland,*' *says the peasant lad;* '*my mother put a green sprig in my shako. I shall put a notch on my musket-stock for every Frenchman I have killed, and shall show it to my children when Gretel and I marry.*' *O, but the Old Guard shoots steady! Green sprig is down on the meadow; his comrades jump over him, one steps on his hand, but he feels nothing. Poor little Patriot; he has not even struck one blow for the Fatherland, but his red blood is sinking into the soil! How bright will bloom the flower of liberty in the land thus watered!*

The Grenadier—home from Russia—is smiling. He is flat on the ground, and his eyes look to the sky. It is cold, cold, he is in the snow; what cares he?—he is with his Emperor."

The fiddler wielded his bow with a kind of frenzy, and above the rattle and the clamour of the distant combat, the scramble and clatter of the Cossacks up the hills, their defiant calls and grunts, his battle-music rose—proud, passionate, tragic.

The remnant of the Cossack horde had reached the summit again in wild disorder, seeking the forest shelter at the first available point. A flight of bullets came singing through the air among them: the little company of grenadiers, marking the routed enemy against the sky-line, had flung a last contemptuous volley after them. The savages squealed and ducked, clinging to their shaggy steeds in fantastic attitudes; a few were struck; one fell, his nearest comrade caught up the reins of his mount and, with exultant yell, led it away with him. The dead man was dragged a few yards till his inert foot fell loose of the hempen stirrup, and he lay, a heap of discoloured rags among the stones. Fear was on no man's face, but grins of defiance undaunted. Their war-cry was still of triumph.

Fiddle-Hans sprang to his feet on the bank. He waved his bow, then drove it across the strings to a new song, shrill and mocking, a song of scorn for the fugitive:

"*Spread your dark wings and fly, obscene birds! Yet exult as you go: the scent of Death is in the air. In a little while you may gorge—but to-day the stricken Eagle can still beat back the carrion crows. Fly, flap your wings—caw—caw!*"

Steven stared amazed at his companion and listened spell-bound. The musician was like a man possessed. His grizzled locks seemed to stand out from his face, his left hand danced along the strings, his right arm worked with fury. If ever catgut and

wood mocked and insulted, that possessed instrument of Fiddle-Hans' did so that day of the combat of Heiligenstadt, in the teeth of the defeated Kalmuck. *Caw, caw!* it shrieked, catching the very guttural of the last belated Cossack, who struggled in rear of his comrades on a wounded horse. The man turned back in his sheepskin saddle, fury in his bloodshot eyes, raised his rough weapon over his head, measuring his distance.

"Take care!" cried Steven, leaping from

"His big-boned, iron-grey horse, splashed through the mud at reckless speed."

the bank. Louder and shriller played Fiddle-Hans.

The savage hurled the lance, and Steven, flinging himself forward, with arms extended, caught the blow. He rolled back upon the player, and both came to the ground together. The music fell mute. Shouting victory, the Cossack drove his bleeding steed into the brushwood.

* * * * *

"If Madame Sidonia were here," said the fiddler, with emphasis on the married title, "what a hero you would be to her!"

He had bound Steven's shoulder—the wound was an ugly gash enough—ministered to him with the wine of the country from a flask of his own, and water from the brook. The contest for the village, between King Jerome's troops and the raiders, was still undecided, and fitful sounds of battle were growling in the valley.

The happy May winds blustered in the tree-tops; they had swept the sky from west to east, more blue than there is colour to describe. There was a wonderful pulse of striving, growing things about them. Every grass-blade shook in lusty individual life. The leafage was full of the bright-eyed, feathered broods of first spring wooings. The whole forest hummed in delicate rumour with the secret joys of Nature's fecundity. . . . In the plain, openly and with tumult, the masters of earth were strewing its fair face with Death.

"If Madame Sidonia were here," had said the fiddler, and cast a sly look at the young man's face over the last knot of his bandage.

Steven frowned and was silent.

"They will go on tearing each other to pieces down there till night. What say you? Shall not grey steed retrace his steps and carry Master Bridegroom back where he should be?"

"No!" cried the other, the blood leaping to his livid face. "A thousand times no! I am not yet the base thing she deems me."

The musician subdued a sigh.

"What a noble thing is true pride!" quoth he, picked up his fiddle and began to examine it carefully. "Heavens!" he cried, "if you had broken it! Does a man fling himself upon another in such inconsiderate fashion when there's a Stradivarius between them?"

"Had it not been for my want of consideration," said Steven, with some pique,

"I think the precious instrument would hardly have known the touch of your fingers again."

"My friend," said the fiddler gravely, "the steel has not been tempered, the lead has not been cast, that will reach this heart. Ah, Lord!"

It was an exclamation of uttermost weariness. He picked at his strings and tightened them with absent fingers. Then he flashed a sudden smile at his companion.

"You are amazed, are you not, at my ingratitude? What! Here have I, Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg, preserved the existence of this wretched tramp at the risk of my noble, valuable one—here have I shed my blue blood to save his muddy fluid, and the creature has not even a 'Thank you!' . . . Comrade," went on the musician, and his brilliant eye dilated, his countenance assumed a lofty, dignified mien, "I would not shame myself and you by such a word as 'Thanks'! The creature that would not give himself to save his fellow-creature when he can is not worth the name of man."

Steven, abashed that he had indeed thought himself heroic, blushed again and, looking down, began idly plucking with his unhurt right hand the wood-violets that grew in patches on the bank. The fiddler followed his movements, then his eye suddenly grew fixed, his jaw dropped. Slowly the healthy colour ebbed from his cheek and left it ashen. Steven, looking at him, was astonished and alarmed.

"For Heaven's sake!" he cried, "are you ill?"

The fiddler stretched out his hand and culled the posy from the other's grasp. The touch of his fingers was as cold as death.

"Violets!" said he in a sort of whisper. "There is blood on them!" He shuddered from head to foot.

"Perhaps all the mystery is but that he is a poor mad gentleman," thought Steven, and looked where his grey was cropping the young grass, and wondered if he could mount unaided.

Then Fiddle-Hans laid the flowers on his knee and, still staring at them with the same eye of mingled horror and grief, gathered his instrument to his embrace and drew from it a strain the like of which Steven had never heard. Low and simple it was, with even a delicate lilt, as to the shadow-dance of bygone joys, yet so heartrending that after a moment or two, the listener, with tears rising to his eyes and a catch at his throat, cried on his companion to stop.

The musician laid down his fiddle and turned his drawn countenance upon the youth.

"That is the melody in the violets, the melody that is never silent in my soul, night or day. You cannot bear it; why, then, you must listen to the story.

"I was once as young as you are—and had also a very noble pride—I had nearly as much reason," said Fiddle-Hans, his pale lips writhing in a smile of bitterest self-scorn; "but as men differ, their same passions vary in motive. It was of little moment to me that I came of an ancient house—(Ah! it pleases you to know so much! You have always guessed it, else had you not frequented me. Let it pass, friend, lest I should blush for you.) No, my pride was the pride of intellect. I knew a vast amount! I learned to lisp English that I might study Bacon and Locke, and to chew German that I might wrangle over Fichte and Kant. I was the friend of Helvetius and Diderot, the rival of Holbach. We worshipped Voltaire. Reason was our God! In short, I was one of those they called the Encyclopædists; we dreamed of doing away with old Abuses and replacing all established things by brand-new Perfections. 'Humanity and Freedom!' was our war-cry. With sweet-oil and rose-water our revolution was to be accomplished. You know what we did for France and the world. We set the first stone rolling, a quarter-century ago, and," with a tragic smile he pointed to the valley, "you can hear the echo of it still reverberating down yonder! Freedom we preached; and the whole world is enslaved as never it was before! Reason was our lodestar; and the State was handed over to the lowest intellects to guide it according to their brute passions! Humanity was our watchword; and France was drenched in blood from end to end, and her sons have brought blood and fire to every land in Europe! The blood of that wretched son of the steppes blackening yonder on the road, the bloodshed in yonder bullet-riddled village by that very volley that shakes us as we sit, is all offered to the honour of that same trinity of our invention: Freedom, Humanity, and Reason! O, glorious was the path we opened! Had we not just cause for pride?"

He fell silent a second; and Steven dared not speak, so corrosive was the bitterness of his every word, so poignant the emotion written on every furrow of his countenance.

"O, it was a golden time!" he resumed.

"Steven's grey shivered under him."

"We philosophised up to the steps of Versailles. Louis made beautiful locks; Marie Antoinette tended snowy sheep; the roses bloomed at Trianon . . . . and not the wisest of us ever saw the precipice yawn. As for me—even the greatest minds are subject to the everyday passions of humanity"—his lips parted upon an ironic smile—"I fell in love, neither more nor less than the most elementary youngster of the land. She——" He hesitated; then, steadying his voice, proceeded in tones which betrayed the effort of speech: "—she was of an old-fashioned Breton stock, and her ideas and mine were as the poles asunder. But upon one common ground, and a fair pasture it was to me, we met and were equal: we loved."

He paused, his breath came quick. "Heaven!" he said, and it seemed as if he knew not that he spoke, "how I loved her!"

He picked up a violet from the heap on

his knees, and passed his fingers over it caressingly; his whole countenance softened. When he began again, it was in gentler accents than Steven had ever heard him use:

"When two people love each other, young man, and one believes the other to be mistaken in some cardinal point of judgment, the dearest thought each cherishes is to bring the Beloved to the truth. I had no doubt but that I could open her mind; she, but that she would redeem my perverted soul. I have told you what a fine pride I had. So noble it was that I was proud of my pride. And being an apostle of Liberty, the idea that a woman should resist her husband, that the weaker vessel should not give way to the stronger, never dawned on my emancipated mind! If we had loved each other less; if we had not cared so intensely that the one should be worthy of the other's ideal! . . . Well, well—we quarrelled! The fault was mine; could I not have been content to worship her in her sweet faith? She had a high spirit. I wounded her in a thousand ways. Women have susceptibilities that we, thick-hided, thick-witted, dream not of. Even when we touch them to caress, we bruise them. And then, when their pain is intolerable and they turn and strike at us, our wound is that of the most innocent, the most injured! O, when my measure was full against her, she insulted me, if you like—much as your little bride this morning insulted your High-mindedness. She said words that my exquisite pride could not endure. My nobility of soul was such that it left me no choice but to desert the woman whom I had vowed to protect; to make parade of my manhood by leaving her to live her own life alone; to cast the frail and lovely thing I had held in my arms away from my love and guardianship. No doubt, no doubt I made some very generous dispositions as regards my fortune (even as you now propose towards Madame Sidonia), and she had her people to go to, even as your wife has—those whom she had given up to come to me. But when the day came that I had to look into my heart and read the truth, what did I see?—Look into your heart now and learn the baseness of your own motives. Why do you leave your bride? Why did I leave mine? For what reason, but that she might weep and mourn for me; that she might learn how precious was the jewel she had not appreciated! To be revenged, revenged on the Beloved!"

He flung himself back against the bole of the fir that rose behind him and closed his eyes.

"I left her," he went on, "left France, left Europe. I went to America, the new home of Freedom, the only country on the face of the earth where the goddess was worshipped as she should be. Well, I had vowed not to return till recalled: I was summoned by a voice terribly different from hers. It took three months before the noise of the storm reached me on that far-off shore; and I knew that it must take me at least a month more ere I could reach her. And she was in danger! I think it was then I began to go mad—for it is understood that I *am* mad, is it not?"

He opened his bright eyes and fixed them suddenly on Steven, who became so extremely embarrassed that the fiddler broke into unmirthful laughter.

"Mad!" he repeated. His gaze flickered. If truth be told, he looked none too reassuringly sane. Then he sank his head between his hands with a groan. "If I were only a little madder!" he exclaimed.

"The story is nearly finished," he went on in a new, toneless voice. "When I landed in France, all the powers of the Hell my superior intellect denied were let loose in the land—Danton, Marat, and Robespierre represented the trilogy of Liberty, Reason, and Humanity! The prisons were full, the guillotine everywhere restless . . . . . this was our Golden Age! A fortnight I looked for her. Have you ever sought in vain one you had loved, even for an hour? Dante never devised a more exquisite torture for his deepest circle. My house in Paris had been confiscated for the nation's soldiers; her father's castle in Lorraine had been burnt to the ground. At my old home at Nancy at last I found a trace. She had refused, it seemed, to join in the flight of her people across the Rhine, but when trouble became threatening, had taken up her post on my estate. That was like her. She had been arrested—so dangerous an enemy of the people! She was in the infamous prison at Nancy. She——" He flung his battered old hat from his head, dashed back his hair, loosened the wide collar at his throat. Breath seemed to fail him. A dark wave of blood rushed to his forehead. "All, all had abandoned her, save one poor girl—a peasant from our farm, whose people were of the local patriots . . . . She was allowed access to the cells. I met this girl at the prison gates, where my frenzied search had brought me at length. She knew me—though I was

"'Take it now, lest a breath from Heaven scatter its bloom.'"

a tramp already. At sight of my face, she clapped her hands and broke into wild sobs. I was too late! That morning . . . . Why do you look at me like that? Do you wonder that I am still alive? That is where the God I denied has His vengeance of me, you see. I cannot die. O, I could kill myself, of course! But, mark how deep has the Encyclopædist fallen . . . .—I dare not, dare not, lest I lose my chance of meeting her again . . . !—Ah! there is great pity in your eyes . . . Her little delicate head—she held it like a queen's. Under the powder her hair was gold. (I have not even one lock of her hair). I used to clasp her slender throat between both my hands . . . . The peasant girl had kept by her to the end. She had stood at the foot of the scaffold, that a last friendly glance might speed her lovely soul. 'She smiled to me,' said the poor creature, sobbing. *My* eyes were dry . . . . Then she drew from her bosom a bunch of violets—and said: '*Madame les avait à son corsage*' . . . "

Fiddle-Hans gathered up the flowers scattered on his knees and crushed them against his face. "She always loved violets," he murmured. "These have no scent," he went on dreamily; "but hers, hers—O, they were sweet!"

"Ah, friend!" cried Steven, and had no further word. Infinite pity indeed was in the look he turned upon the unhappy musician. It seemed as if the latter wandered as he spoke again.

"There was blood on the violets," said he, dropping his hands; "her blood and mine—for the man that was I died, too, then, murdered in his youth, even as she." His face had grown livid again; his eyes were bright and restless in their orbit. "The something that lived on, the miserable carcass, the old man—call it myself, if you will—this self that is before you now—it took the violets and began to walk away. . . . And it has walked ever since!" He gave a laugh, and the sound of it was mad. "No place could be home to me again—no land could be country, France least of all.—But the skies and the trees are kind; they understand my sorrow, they take it into themselves, and sometimes they give me back peace. And then there's the music. . . . I was always a musician. One, a village priest, found out by accident that the mad tramp he had sheltered played better on his old Strad than he did himself. The fiddle was to him as his child, but he gave it to me: for he had compassion on me. And so was born Fiddle-Hans. And Fiddle-Hans and his fiddle will walk until one day he can walk no more—and then he will lie down on the kind, brown earth and turn his face to the skies . . .. perhaps!"

He thrust the flowers into his breast. Then he leaned forward, his elbow on his knees, sheltering his eyes in his hands, and there was silence. The valley below had sunk into stillness.

While Steven had listened to the story of one man's defeat in life, a combat, where the fate of hundreds had been decided, had been fought and won. And now they were picking up the dead yonder, in the evening calm of the plain. The wind had fallen with the fall of the day, and only the topmost branches of the pines swayed and whispered in scarcely perceptible airs. The light was growing golden mellow; the shadows were lengthening. Thrush and blackbird began fitfully to pipe the first notes of their vesper song. Steven remembered his wound.

The fiddler turned and spoke. It was with composure.

"Well," said he, "which way shall it be, back or forward?"

"I do not know," said Steven in a low voice, and dropped his eyelids as if ashamed.

The fiddler stretched out his hand and helped the other to rise, with a vigorous grasp. As they stood side by side, he suddenly cast his arm round the young man's shoulders.

"The child," said he, "Sidonia . . .! I would like her to be happy. When her soul looks out of her clear eyes, when she moves her head with its golden burden . . . she has a trick of speech, a laugh . . . O, it is like a refrain of old music to me, a sighing strain from a lost life! Her little slender throat—I could hold it in both my hands . . . Go back to her . . . If I knew her happy, my restless spirit would no longer haunt the ways that hold her. Ah! you think it will be hard? I tell you it will not. You do not know a woman's heart. Forget that your pride is hurt. Remember that you are young. O, if you but knew! Life has one unsurpassable flower for youth—take it now, lest a breath from Heaven scatter its bloom. Its scent is for you! The love of your youth; go, gather it."

"I will go back," said Steven, and his lips trembled.

Silently Fiddle-Hans loosened the grey horse, helped the wounded man to mount, and led the way down the hill.

ELECTRICITY IN THE RAILWAY SERVICE.

BY CHARLES H. GRINLING.

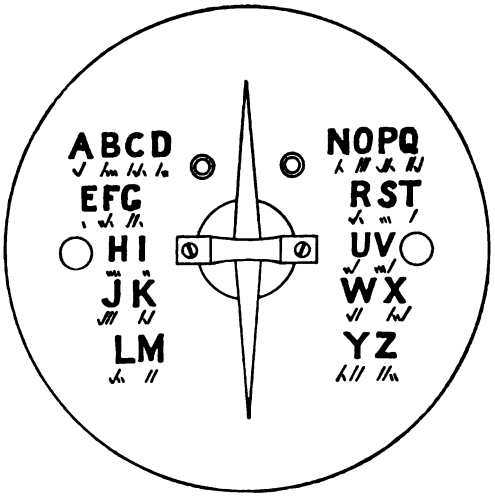
IT is not at the present time generally known that the first important adaptation of electricity to commercial use—in the form of telegraphy—was the outcome of the requirements of the railway service. Safety and efficiency in the working of lines of railway alike called for some means whereby the officials in charge of the traffic could be kept cognisant of the movements and relative positions of the various trains and vehicles. Oersted's celebrated discovery of the power of an electric (or, as it was then more commonly called, a voltaic) current to deflect a compass needle suggested to Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Fothergill Cooke a means by which instantaneous communications might be made from one railway station to another, and in conjunction with Mr. Wheatstone he established an experimental circuit between Euston and Camden Town on the London and Birmingham (now London and North-Western) Railway, wires covered in wooden trunking being used. The first electric telegraph for everyday working was erected in 1838 between Paddington and West Drayton on the Great Western Railway, the wires being at first placed in a tube, but afterwards stretched on posts. Two years later the London and Blackwall Railway was opened, the trains being drawn, not by locomotives, but by rope-traction. It being desired to start a train every quarter of an hour in each direction, the electric telegraph was installed throughout the length of the line, and the whole traffic regulated by its agency.

THE "FIVE NEEDLE" ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH INSTRUMENT USED IN ORIGINAL RAILWAY INSTALLATIONS.

The instrument used in these pioneer installations was the "five needle" telegraph, shown in the accompanying picture. It will be seen that only twenty different signs could be given by this apparatus, and that the letters c, j, q, u, x, and z were not represented, but had to be signified by combinations of others. Soon after the telegraph had been installed on the Great Western, a murder was committed by a Quaker at Slough. It was suspected that the murderer, after committing the crime, had entered a train for London, and the aid of the railway telegraph was called in to follow up the clue. In sending the message to Paddington the operator had to spell the most important word "kwaker," owing to the lack of a sign to represent the letter q; but this phonetic spelling was readily understood, and on alighting from the train, the man so described was astounded to find that the news of his crime had preceded him.

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH INSTRUMENT NOW MOST EXTENSIVELY USED IN THE TRANSMISSION OF RAILWAY MESSAGES—VIZ.: THE "SINGLE NEEDLE."

This incident made a profound impression upon the public mind, and created an immediate demand for the recognised use of the railway telegraph-wires for other messages besides those relating to the movements of trains, etc. Under these circumstances it would not have been surprising had the railway companies added the business of telegraph companies to their proper functions, just as later on they became road carriers and steamship, dock, and hotel owners. Instead of this, however, separate telegraph companies were formed, and those



ALPHABET OF THE SINGLE NEEDLE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH INSTRUMENT.

railway companies who had not got wires already fixed along their lines arranged with the telegraph companies to erect these. As a rule, separate wires were provided for the public and railway services, the latter being worked exclusively by the railway authorities. At busy centres the telegraph companies kept their own offices and staff of operators, but at the smaller stations the whole work—both public and official—was done by the operators employed by the railway companies under arrangement with the telegraph companies. Quite a number of these concerns grew up in more or less active competition one with another, such as the Electric Telegraph Company, which became the Electric and International on extending its lines across the German Ocean to the Hague, the British Electric and the Magnetic Telegraph which were amalgamated into the British and Irish Magnetic, the London District, the United Kingdom, and one or two smaller concerns. The confusion which resulted led to the Government taking over the telegraph system of the United Kingdom in 1870, when the wires necessary for railway working were handed over entirely to the railway companies, and the others were reserved for the use of the Post Office. Those public wires which run along the railway lines are maintained by the companies under their agreements with the Government; and the railway companies still act as agents of the Postmaster-General for the collection of public telegrams at most of their stations, and in some cases for their delivery. Under modern conditions, however, the fact is becoming forgotten that the whole development of electric telegraphy, with its incalculable influence upon business and social life, was the outcome of the demand for an improved means of regulating the traffic of the pioneer railways of this country.

But for the electric telegraph it would be impossible to work railway traffic with any degree of frequency except at perpetual risk of collisions. With its aid the working even of frequent trains in both directions over a single line (with passing places) has become absolutely safe—supposing rules are obeyed; whilst on double lines trains can be started one after another in the same direction at as short an interval as two minutes. Indeed, on the Central London Railway as many as thirty-one trains have been got away

SIGNAL ELECTRICALLY CONTROLLED BY "INSULATED RAIL" AT ENTRANCE TO KING'S CROSS TUNNELS, G. N. R.

from the Bank station within a single hour, following one another with perfect safety over the same pair of metals. This is the triumph of the "block system" of railway working, which was first put into operation by Messrs. Cooke and Wheatstone on the Norwich and Yarmouth Railway in 1844. The one weak link in the chain of the block system is that the telegraphic communications upon which its working depends must all be transmitted into signals through the agency of fallible human beings stationed in a series of cabins along the length of the line, whilst these signals in turn must by fallible engine-drivers be translated into those stoppings and startings of trains at critical moments upon which the safety of the passengers depend. It is an open question whether any mechanism which human ingenuity can construct can be less fallible than the human brain itself, but, whereas human failures are so varied and erratic as to be incalculable, the failings of mechanism can be foreseen and guarded against, so as

MODEL INTERLOCKING FRAME FOR OPERATING SIGNALS AND POINTS BY ELECTRICITY (SIEMENS BROTHERS' SYSTEM).

to produce a system in which the chances of dangerous error are infinitely small.

Thus the perfection of railway signalling tends more and more to supersede human action by machinery, in which process electricity is playing every year a larger and more important part. Out of simple telegraphic signalling, the "block" system was developed. Then came the "lock and block" system, which, as its name implies, so interlocks the telegraph instruments with the outdoor signals as to compel each signalman to maintain a clear section between following trains. Then followed the "insulated rail," "rail-contact," and "treadle" systems, which all make the train itself the agency in preserving the clear section behind it; and these in turn were developed into the "track circuit" system, which converts one rail of each track into a telegraphic conductor, so that the trains themselves are continually signalling to one another by opening and closing circuits as they pass up and down the lines. Finally, we have the track circuit system combined with an automatic train-stopping apparatus, so that electrically operated mechanism performs, on sections of line where there are no junctions, the functions both of signalman and engine-driver, visual signals being rendered unnecessary, and each train stopping of itself when the electric current passing through the rail communicates to the brake apparatus the fact that there is an obstruction in the section ahead. Nor, if this system be perfected, need the protection be confined to a single pair of

ELECTRIC MOTOR FOR OPERATING SIGNALS AND POINTS (SIEMENS BROTHERS', SYSTEM).

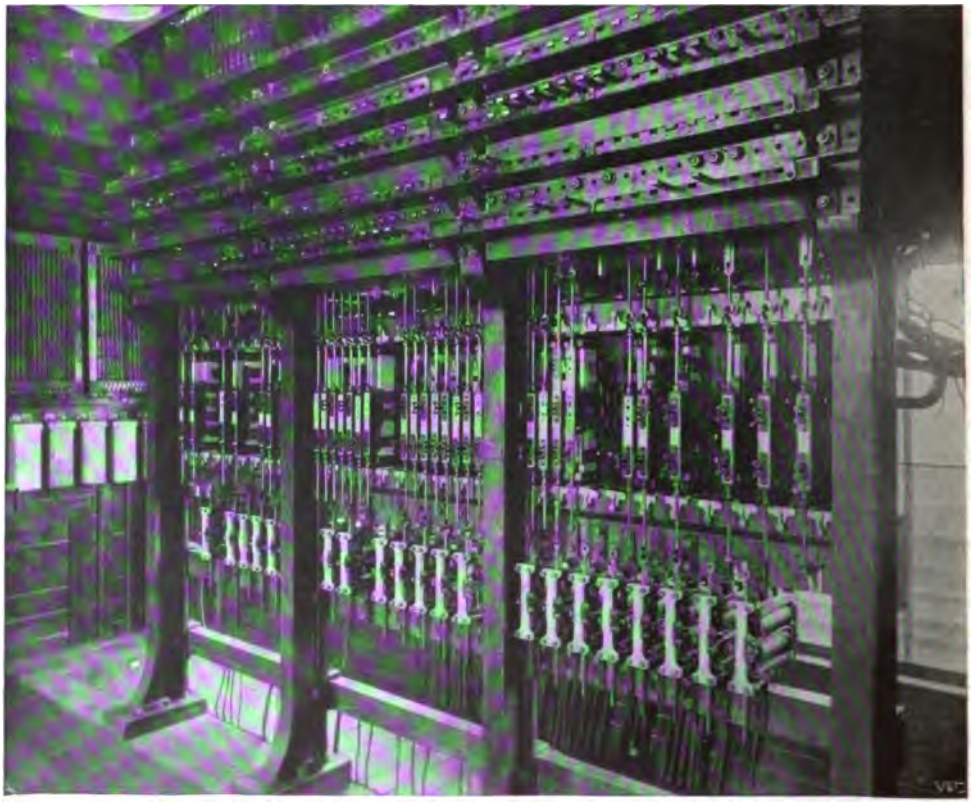
metals. Suppose a derailment occurs, and the parallel track is fouled by the locomotive falling across it. Instantly the electric circuit of that other track is broken, and although every man on the derailed train may have been killed, and there be no one else in sight, the warning is flashed back in both directions automatically, and approaching trains are stopped on both tracks, instead of ploughing helplessly into the *débris*.

This, in very rough outline, is a sketch of the part to be played by electricity in an ideal system of railway operation. On the recently opened New York Subway the ideal is already realised, and the same system is likely soon to be in operation on the Metropolitan District, and on the "tubes" which are being constructed under the control of Mr. Yerkes. The London and South-Western has several important sections of its main lines equipped with automatic signals operated by electric track circuit, but the automatic train-stop—or brake-applier—has not yet been adopted on any long-distance railway, except, partially, on the North-Eastern, in a non-electrical form. The Liverpool Overhead Railway has been worked by automatic signals operated electri-

cally on the "Timmis" system, ever since its opening in 1893. The "lock and block" system, whereby the signals and points are electrically interlocked with the telegraph instruments, was first introduced by Mr. W. R. Sykes on the London, Chatham and Dover Railway about twenty years ago, and it is now extensively used for working traffic in and out of very large terminal stations, such as Liverpool Street and Waterloo, in London, and St. Enoch's, Glasgow.

The Great Eastern's installation of "lock and block" on its suburban lines is very complete. Every stop signal controlling the trains on the suburban lines running out of Liverpool Street is normally locked at danger and cannot be lowered by the signalman until he has first asked permission from the signalman in the box in advance, which he does by ringing an electric bell. This permission the man of whom it is asked has not the power to give unless the preceding train has passed him and is well on its way into the next section. It is the actual presence of the train in this further section which by depressing an electrical "rail-contact" notifies to the signalman that his section is clear and gives him the power to permit the man behind him to admit another train. On the Great Northern for years past sections of the rails outside King's Cross station have been "insulated" in connection with the application of batteries, relays, and electric locks to the signals. Under this system the signalman is reminded of the presence of a train waiting for a signal to proceed, by the wheels and axles of the engine "short circuiting" the insulated section, the process putting an electric lock upon conflicting signals and giving the signalman both audible and visual indication of the position of the train, when it is out of his sight.

It is common knowledge that the telegraphic block system of railway signalling is supplemented at junctions of two or more tracks by the interlocking system, whereby the signalman is prevented from pulling off signals or setting points which conflict one with another. In the ordinary form of interlocking, electricity is not employed, the work being done by horizontal and vertical steel bars contained in a frame beneath the



INTERIOR OF "ALL-ELECTRIC" INTERLOCKING FRAME, L. AND N. W. R. ("CREWE" SYSTEM).

THE ELECTRO-PNEUMATIC TUBE SYSTEM FOR THE COLLECTION AND DELIVERY OF RAILWAY TELEGRAMS. THE INSTRUMENTS INSTALLED BY MESSRS. REID BROTHERS, OF LONDON, AT PADDINGTON, G.W.R.

levers in the signal-box, notches in which, by interlocking with one another, determine what movements of the levers can be made. This is sufficient for the safeguarding of the simpler kinds of junctions, but where there are a maze of lines crossing one another, it is necessary to supplement the mechanical interlocking with electrical locks of various kinds. In addition to its use in this and other ways as a controller of the signalman, electricity is also extensively employed in modern installations as the means of enabling the man to do the actual work of pulling over the signals and setting the points. In some systems, such as that installed on the London and North-Western at Crewe and elsewhere, and in the system patented by Messrs. Siemens Bros., which is being introduced on the Great Western and Midland, electricity alone is employed, and all the man has to do is to set electric motors at work by moving switches in his cabin, thus saving much manual labour as well as enabling the operations to be more quickly and efficiently performed. In other systems, of which the "Westinghouse" is the best known, pneumatic power does the actual work of movement, the function of electricity being to supply the agency whereby the signalman controls and directs the operation of the compressed air. This electro-pneumatic system of operating signals and points has been adopted in England by the Great Eastern, North-Eastern, and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies.

For the safe working of single lines of railway, electricity is used in the interlocking of the train-staff or train-tablet apparatus. No engine-driver is allowed to start his train from a station without having the staff or tablet, and the electric interlocking of the apparatus ensures that the staff or tablet cannot be issued from station A without the consent and co-operation of station B, and that when once a station-master, signalman, or porter has issued the "Open, Sesame!" to the driver, it is impossible for permission to be given for another train to move in the same section until the first train has restored the tablet or staff at the other end. In some cases, to make assurance doubly sure, the staff or tablet apparatus is also electrically interlocked with the signal and point levers.

It often happens on railways that a signalman from his cabin cannot see all his "distant" signals, owing to some of them being obscured by curves, bridges, or tunnels. In such cases the aid of electricity has for many years past been called in to keep him advised that his movements of the levers are properly carried out on the posts. For this purpose a miniature electric signal is placed in the box over the lever of each distant signal, and by means of a wire, a battery, and a device attached to the signal-post, the movement of the semaphore is repeated in the cabin. By another electrical contrivance the condition of the light of a distant signal is indicated by a bell which automatically rings when the flame diminishes. This is ingeniously accomplished by a thermostat fixed in the signal-lamp, which is so arranged as to close an electric circuit when the temperature inside the lamp is lowered

INTERIOR OF ENGINE-ROOM, G. N. R. ELECTRIC LIGHTING STATION, HOLLOWAY.

by the reduction of the flame. There is also fixed to the post a device whereby the removal of the lamp closes a circuit and rings a bell in the cabin. In a somewhat similar way the position of "points" is electrically indicated in the signal-box from which they are controlled, while at pumping-stations for watering locomotives, the same device is used for showing the height of the water in a distant tank.

At one time it was thought that the telegraph would be superseded for many purposes of railway working by the telephone; but notwithstanding the great utility of the latter, the use of the telegraph has continued to increase proportionately with the growth of railway business. It has been found that the telephone cannot be safely substituted for the block telegraph on double lines, nor for the train staff or tablet on single lines; but it may be, and is, used as an auxiliary to those appliances in place of the "conversing" telegraph, and so permits the employment of signalmen who are not trained telegraphists. Nevertheless, some of the principal railway companies still train their signalmen in telegraphy before entrusting them with the working of cabins controlling running lines. In the hands of expert operators, the telegraph is a more trustworthy instrument of conversation than the telephone, as sibilant sounds cannot always be clearly transmitted by the latter agency. The telegraph is also the more expeditious means of communication for railway messages, and less costly to install, especially when worked on the duplex principle, whereby messages can be sent in both directions simultaneously over one wire. It has been found that half as many words again can be transmitted in a given time through the duplex one-wire telegraph as through the two-wire telephone. At places, however, where the services of telegraphists are not considered worth the extra cost of their training, the telephone is utilised—as, for instance, in the station-masters' and inspectors' offices and in shunters' cabins. It is also largely used for the collection and distribution of railway telegrams, though several large railway companies have installed a system of pneumatic tubes for this purpose at very busy centres, where as many as 7,000 to 8,000 messages are dealt with in the course of a day. At Liverpool Street station all telegrams received or to be

despatched are transmitted through tubes, and the two telegraph-receiving offices on the platforms on the east and west sides of the station are also connected with the head office at Hamilton House by the same method. There are several miles of these tubes at Liverpool Street, constituting a miniature single-track railway system operated by air-power and worked by air-compressors situated about half a mile from the head office. The ringing of an electric bell and a visual electrical indication announce the arrival of the carrier at each terminus, the whole operation being practically instantaneous, as the carrier with its load travels with lightning-like rapidity. There is a similar installation at Paddington, and both were designed by Messrs. Reid Brothers.

For communications between the various departments of a railway the telephone is extensively employed, and there is a central exchange at every important range of offices. On railways which have administrative offices situated at more than one centre, the different telephone exchanges have been connected by means of "trunk" wires with highly satisfactory results, heads of departments or their assistants being able personally to converse one with another. All railway offices of importance are, of course, also connected with the public telephone system ; but when

HILL OF HOWTH ELECTRIC TRAMWAY, GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY (IRELAND).

Photo by] [*British Thomson-Houston Co.*

PREPARING THE PERMANENT WAY FOR ELECTRIC TRACTION NEAR NEWCASTLE, NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY.

an irate trader or traveller rings up the general manager to complain of a late train or a lost consignment of goods, he invariably finds himself wasting his flow of language upon an imperturbable office-boy, and he is seldom able to establish communication with any higher official. On the other hand, if his inquiry relates to tourist facilities or the despatch of goods, he is pretty sure to be immediately switched on to a suave head of department, especially if his inquiry relates to traffic for which another railway company competes.

Before passing from this branch of our subject we may note that the total mileage of wire employed by railway companies themselves in telegraphy was recently estimated at about 113,000, besides which about 86,000 miles of wire were maintained by the railway authorities for the Post Office. The total number of instruments employed was estimated at 158,597. These figures, which I take from an address delivered by Mr. Langdon, late electrical engineer of the Midland Railway Company, are stated by him to embrace "the principal British railways," and relate to the year 1901. Were statistics available of the whole telegraph mileage of the railways of the United Kingdom at the present time, the numbers would be considerably larger.

Next to its use as a means of communication—in the forms of telegraph, signalling, and telephone—electricity is most extensively employed by railway companies as an illumi-

nant. A great deal of the work of railway operation has, it is needless to say, to be done under artificial light, and considerations of speed and accuracy of working as regards the *employés*, and of comfort and safety as regards the travelling public, have brought about the rapid introduction of electric lighting in many departments of the railway service. Mr. Langdon, in the lecture from which I have just quoted, estimated that in 1901 there were 7,182 arc lamps and 85,683 incandescent lamps in use on the principal British railways; and so great has been the progress made during the three ensuing years that I should think these figures might almost be doubled to give an idea of the extent of the use of electricity in railway premises in this country at the present time. Electricity generated from the axles of carriages by the ingenious method patented by Messrs. Stone and Co., of Deptford, is also extensively used in the lighting of railway passenger trains, about 10,000 carriages being fitted with this system in the United Kingdom. Of course, where electric traction is employed, the whole passenger service is illuminated by the same agency.

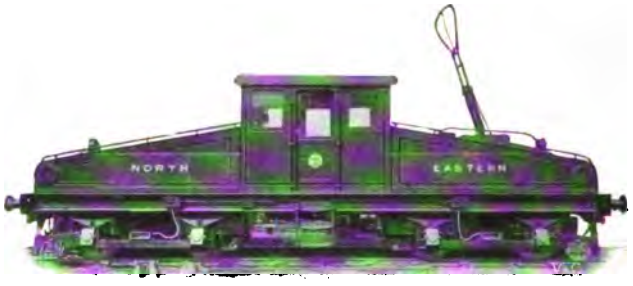


Photo by] [*British Thomson-Houston Co.*
ELECTRIC GOODS LOCOMOTIVE, NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY.

Photo by] [*British Thomson-Houston Co.*
OVERHEAD CONSTRUCTION FOR WORKING GOODS TRAFFIC BY ELECTRICITY. MANORS (NEWCASTLE) GOODS YARD, N. E. R.

It is an open question whether at the present day it is more economical for a railway company to erect its own electric-lighting plant or to draw the current from a public supply; but several of the companies who were pioneers in the use of electric light on their lines had really no alternative but to provide their own power-stations, as ten or twelve years ago, when the movement in favour of the electric lighting of railway premises first set in strongly, there were few public generating-plants capable of supplying the needs of a large railway centre. To-day we have the case of the North-Eastern Railway Company being able to take current from an electrical supply company, not merely for lighting and miscellaneous power, but for the electrical operation of its passenger traffic on thirty-seven miles of its system in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. On the other hand, the Lancashire and Yorkshire, which has electrified its line between Liverpool and Southport, has its private generating-station, and so has the Metropolitan Railway Company, which, in connection with the conversion of its system, has built at Neasden the largest power-station owned by any single railway company. The power-house now being erected at Chelsea by the Underground Electric Railways of London Syndicate is larger still, but this is for the supply of several "tubes," as well as for the Metropolitan District Railway. Each of the already opened "tube" railways of London—the Central London, City and South London, Waterloo and City, and Great Northern and City—has its own separate generating-plant.

Most of the principal railway companies of the United Kingdom have one or more electric generating-stations for the manufacture of light and miscellaneous power at important centres. The Great Northern Railway Company, for example, has for some ten years past had a power-house at Holloway which supplies current on the high-tension system for lighting the stations, goods yards, offices, etc., over a section of railway extending five miles north of King's Cross, and covering an area of 318 acres. The output

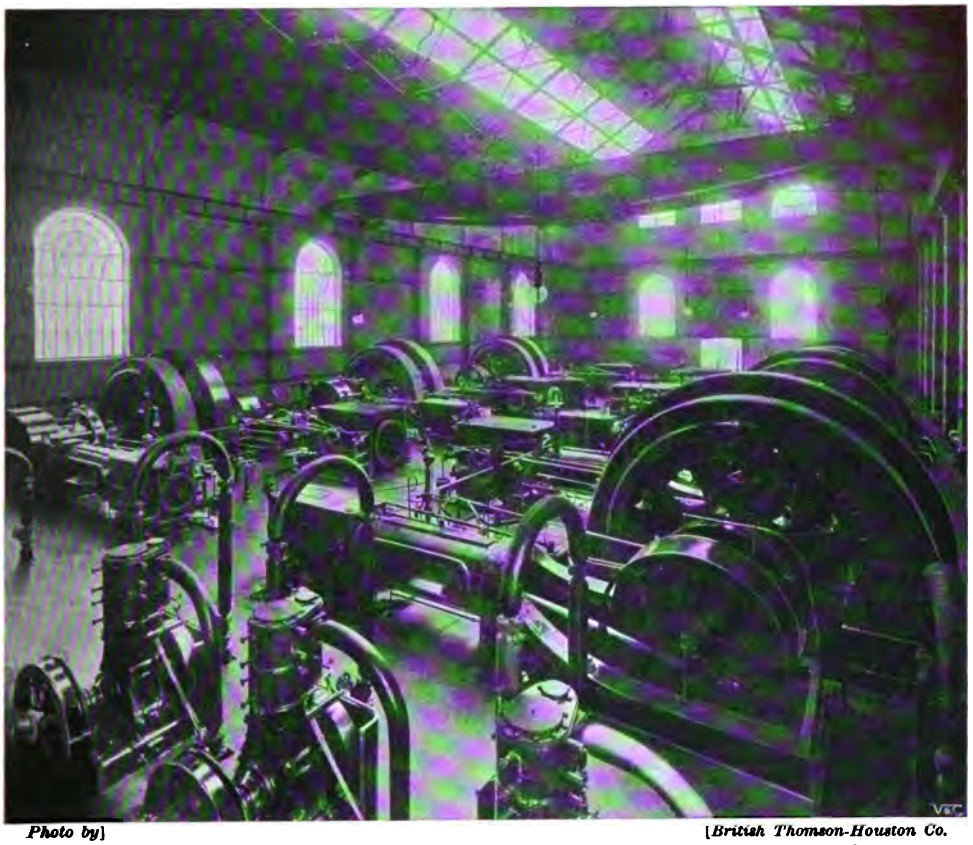


Photo by] [*British Thomson-Houston Co.*

INTERIOR OF ELECTRICAL GENERATING-STATION, CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY, SHEPHERD'S BUSH.

of this station is considerably over a million and half units a year, which is larger than the outputs of two-thirds of the generating-plants belonging to municipalities and electric-lighting companies in the Kingdom. The Midland, which was one of the first of our railways to adopt electric lighting on a large scale, has a high-tension generating-plant at Highgate Road, Kentish Town, which lights the three passenger stations between that place and St. Pancras, the goods stations at that terminus and at Somers Town, the coal depôt, and the Midland Grand Hotel, as well as supplying power for various cranes, traversers, and pumps. At busy railway centres, space and time are of the utmost value, particularly in the outdoor work. The ability, with a good system of lighting, to load and despatch five trains where four only could be dealt with under an inefficient mode of illumination, means a saving of twenty per cent. in capital outlay for extensions of the premises, besides a considerable daily economy in labour and rolling-stock. As public supply of electric current becomes general throughout the country, the use of electricity will probably supersede all other means of illumination in large railway stations and offices, and at the biggest centres the companies will probably continue to put down their own generating-plant, particularly when the current is wanted for traction as well as for lighting and miscellaneous purposes. At the present time the Great Western is building a very large power-house in the neighbourhood of Paddington.

The first electrically equipped line to be worked by a steam railway company in the United Kingdom was the tramway round the Hill of Howth, near Dublin, constructed a few years ago by the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland. This pleasure-ground of the capital city of the sister Isle rises some 580 feet above the sea-level and commands an extensive view of Dublin Bay and its picturesque surroundings. The tramway is over five miles long, the first three and half miles being on a rising, and the remaining one and three-quarter miles on a falling gradient. Although worked as an independent

tramway, the line is of the standard Irish gauge, 5 ft. 3 in., so as to be capable of being linked on to any subsequent electrification of the company's system. The electric power is supplied from a special generating-station erected by the railway company at one end of the line.

The North-Eastern, the Lancashire and Yorkshire, the Mersey, the Metropolitan, and the Metropolitan District are the five English railway companies who, at the time

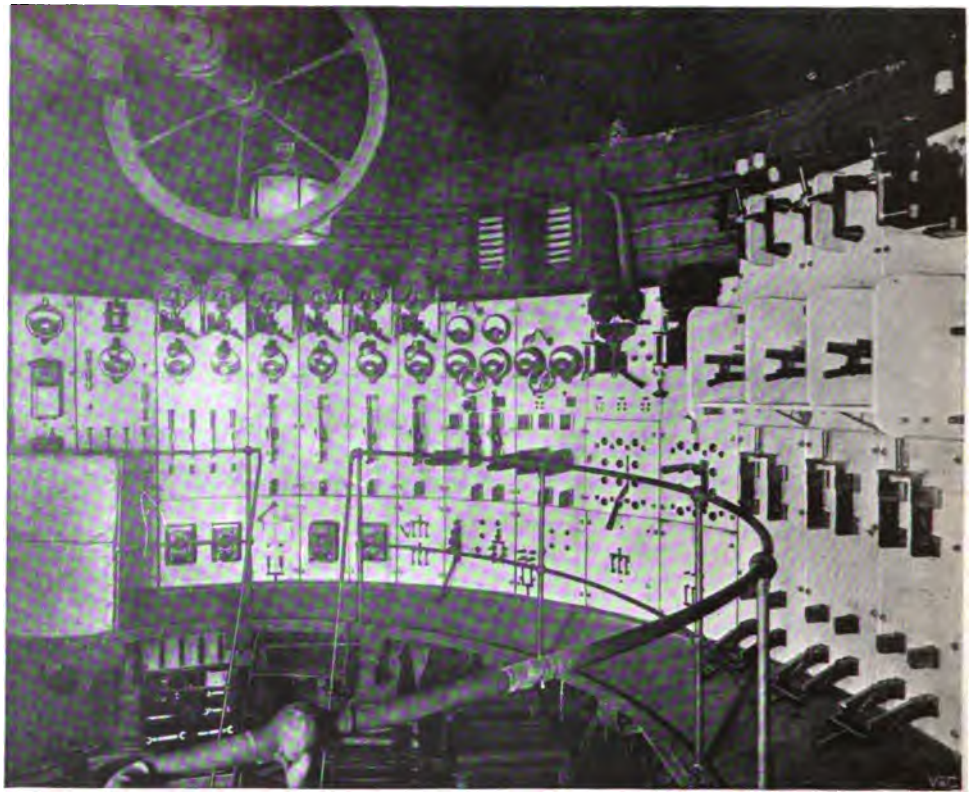


Photo by] [*British Thomson-Houston Co.*

INTERIOR OF SUB-STATION FOR REDUCING AND CONVERTING ELECTRIC TRACTION CURRENT, CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY, NOTTING HILL GATE.

of writing, have discarded the steam-locomotive in favour of electrical (steam-generated) power — the two first-named partially, and the other two wholly (in intention, if not in accomplished fact). For urban and suburban traffic the superiority of electrical over steam-locomotive traction is admitted, subject to some doubts as to whether so many passengers can be got through over a single pair of metals during the "rush hours" morning and evening by electric trains as by the long trains hauled at present by the most powerful steam-locomotives. But for a traffic the demands of which are fairly constant throughout the day, electric traction is admittedly far superior, as it allows of a more frequent service than is possible when each train has to be hauled by its own self-contained unit of power. Less time also is wasted in stopping and starting, owing to the superior "acceleration" and "deceleration" of the electric motor. These motors are not now generally run as separate vehicles (as was the case in the original equipment of the Central London), but are suspended beneath two or more of the passenger coaches composing the train. By an ingenious system of "master-control" these "multiple-unit" trains can be driven from a single motorman's cabin; and as one of these cabins is provided at each end of the train, no terminal shunting is required. The motorman simply walks through the train to the other end, adjusts a few switches, and the train is ready for the return journey. The multiple-unit system of operation was first

THE FIRST TRAIN RUN BY ELECTRICITY ON THE METROPOLITAN EXTENSION RAILWAY.

introduced into this country by the British Thomson-Houston Company, the electrical contractors for the Central London Railway, and on every electric railway since opened for passenger traffic the same principle has been adopted. Indeed, except on the City and South London, which had already been in operation for about ten years, the use of separate electric motors for passenger working in the United Kingdom is unknown. For the haulage of goods trains it is, of course, necessary to have a separate motor, but so far electricity has not been adopted for goods traffic except on the Quayside (Newcastle) branch of the North-Eastern—a line with very steep gradients, and running mostly through ill-ventilated tunnels. For this service the British Thomson-Houston Company have supplied some very powerful electric-locomotives which are so equipped that they can draw their supply of current either from a conductor rail laid on the ground or from an overhead conductor.

The complete operation of a long-distance main line of railway by electric traction is a problem which no railway company in the world has yet tackled. It is a problem, not of power itself—for electricity can do everything which is required—but of the economical distribution of power. The system adopted on practically all our electric railways at the present time is for the current to be generated by means of steam-engines at a central power-station, conveniently situated as regards both coal and water supply. The electricity thus produced in the form of high-tension "alternating" current is transmitted by cables to sub-stations situated along the course of the railway at intervals of about five miles apart. Then the tension is reduced by the agency of rather elaborate machinery from the high to a much lower tension, and it is converted from "alternating" to

Photo by] [*General Electric Co., New York.*

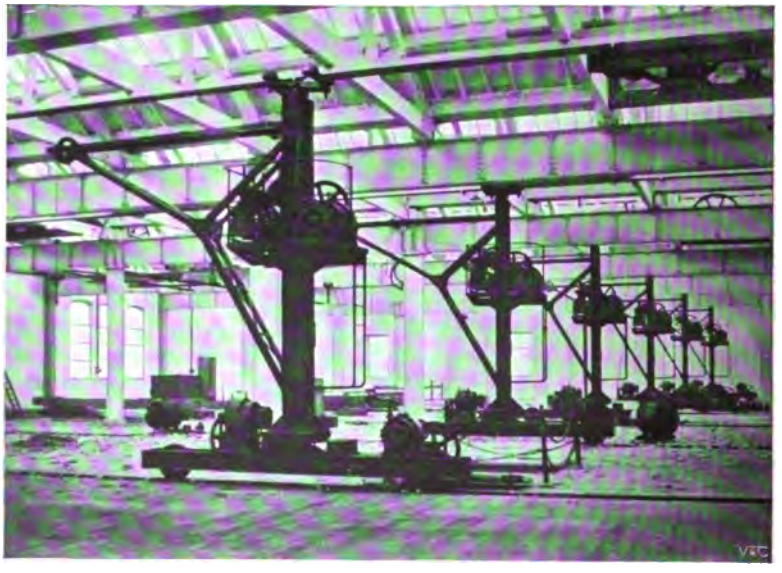
ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE AND TRAIN, NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILWAY.

ELECTRIC TRAVELLING CRANE IN LOCOMOTIVE-REPAIRING-SHOP, GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY, DONCASTER.

"direct" current. In this form it is conducted to the permanent way, which has been prepared to receive it by the laying down throughout the entire length of each track of a "third" or "conductor" rail. The motors attached to the trains are then able to pick up the direct current by means of a "shoe," and to convert it into hauling power. A return conductor has also to be provided, which either takes the form of a fourth rail or is supplied by the "bonding" of one of the running rails. The form of overhead conductor, familiar in the case of tramways, may be employed in place of the conductor rail, and this has been done at the Manors (Newcastle) goods yard of the North-Eastern, the electric locomotives which work in and out of that yard being provided with sliding bow "trolleys" as well as shoes, to enable them to pick up the current either from the third rail or the overhead conductor.

With a view of eliminating the costly sub-stations required under this system and reducing the cost of the conductors, motors have recently been brought out which can be operated by high-tension alternating current—*i.e.*, by the electricity in the form in which it issues from the central power-house. This invention is expected greatly to expedite the conversion of long-distance lines, as it is estimated to effect a reduction in cost of equipment of from 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. The London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company is about to equip a section of its line in the neighbourhood of London on this high-tension alternating current system, using an overhead conductor for feeding the current direct from the power-house to the motors on the trains. On the other hand, the New York Central Railway Company, which recently embarked upon the electrification of about forty miles of its lines in the vicinity of New York, has adopted direct-current motors. The electric-locomotives which have been built by the General Electric Company of New York for hauling the long-distance passenger trains of the New York Central

ELECTRIC TUBE-CUTTER (WEBB'S PATENT) IN USE AT CREWE LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, L. AND N. W. R.



ELECTRIC "JIB" CRANES IN GOODS WAREHOUSE, LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY, BRADFORD.

between Croton and the Grand Central Station, are the most powerful in the world, and one of them on its trials developed a speed of seventy-two miles an hour with a train weighing 370 tons.

Space does not permit me to do more than mention the various miscellaneous uses to which electric power is put for the handling of goods traffic at railway stations, docks, etc., and in numerous other ways. For working cranes, lifts, capstans, etc., electricity is the most economical power to employ when varying loads have to be dealt with; but when the load is constant, hydraulic power has the preference for this class of work. Wagon-loads of minerals, for example, can be best dealt with by water power, as in the case of the hydraulic coal-tips described in this magazine last month. But for dealing with general goods, electrical machinery is usually the more economical, as the weights to be handled vary very much, requiring a continual adjustment of the power to the load, if waste is to be avoided. Special mention may be made of the electric cranes and capstans erected by Messrs. Cowans, Sheldon and Co., Ltd. (in conjunction with Messrs. Siemens Bros. and Co., Ltd.), at the Middlesborough and Hartlepool Docks of the North-Eastern Railway. The Lancashire and Yorkshire has also put down extensive installations of similar plant in its goods warehouses at Bradford and Bolton. In the workshops belonging to railway companies, where locomotives, carriages, and wagons are built and repaired, the use of electricity in place of direct steam, for driving cranes, hoists, and tools of

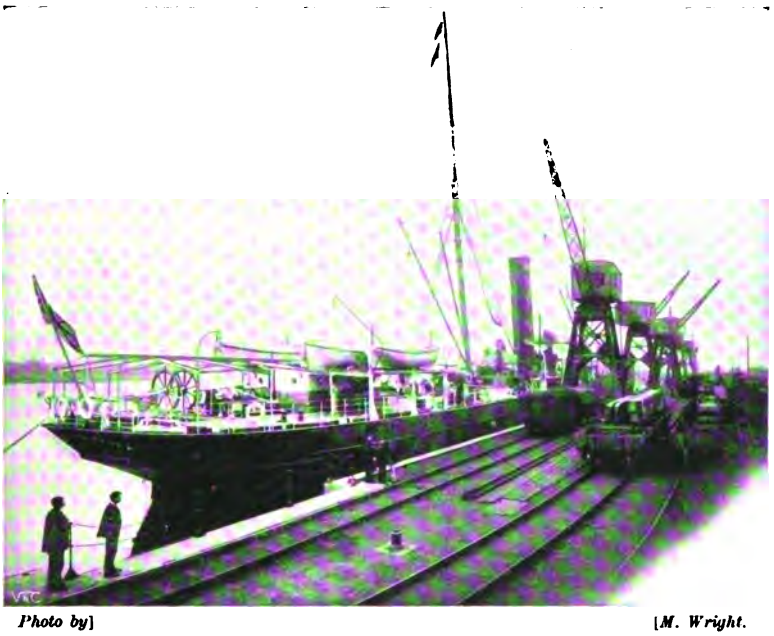


Photo by] [*M. Wright.*

ELECTRIC TRAVELLING CRANES AT MIDDLESBOROUGH DOCKS, N. E. R.

ELECTRIC CAPSTAN FOR SHUNTING WAGONS AT MIDDLESBOROUGH DOCKS, N. E. R.

various descriptions, is coming gradually into vogue as new plant is laid down, and great economies are being effected through the resultant centralisation of the power production and its more perfect adaptation to the work required. At the Doncaster shops of the Great Northern, for example, electric-motors totalling 2,000 horse-power are employed, and the system is being still extended. At its Victoria Station, Manchester, the Lancashire and Yorkshire has had for some years past an overhead electric traveller for conveying hampers and luggage between the various platforms and the parcels office, and this has proved so useful that a second traveller has lately been installed. At large stations an electrical platform-indicator is employed to indicate to the officials and public the character of approaching trains and the platforms at which they will arrive. The indicator is connected with a transmitter in the signal-box. The same apparatus in a smaller form is used as a "train-router" between signal-boxes.

THE RED APPLE.

I FOUND an apple on the green,
I held it from me in the sun:
I saw the glittering Fairy Queen
And all her maids pass, one by one.
The ground was white, as white as snow,
I saw a white goose, spick and span;
Pages flew past, all tip-a-toe,
Each counting as he ran.

There were three apples on the wall,
And one was pink, and one was red;
I saw the Goose-Girl pass them all
With a gold crown on her head.
I heard the Bellman ring his bell,
And folks run searching through the town
Five Wives sat round the Wonder Well,
And then—the sun went down!

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Sheltered awhile in a Buddhist monastery, they hear of the recent visit of a stranger who has told the Lamas that his countryfolk, "dwelling beyond the Far Mountains," worship a priestess called Hes, or the Hesea, and upon persuasion the abbot of the monastery tells them that in a former incarnation he himself has seen the great priestess, who was "all loveliness." A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." The symbol vanishes, the fire sinks, but they are sure that as it was sent of old to show them a path of escape from the Place of Death, so now it has been sent again in greeting to point out the path to the Place of Life where Ayesha dwells. A further ascent into the mountains reveals their Promised Land, with the symbol of their vision, an enormous pillar of rock, whereof the top was formed to the shape of a loop. Peril by avalanche and glacier intervenes, but brings them slowly nearer to their hopes. Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman, and see him chase to a hideous death at the fangs of his hounds a great lord of the land who has dared to make love to her. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the Hesea of the "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers at the Gate, the message concluding: "Bring them safely to the Mountain, knowing that in this matter I shall hold him and you to account. Myself I will not meet them, since to do so would be to break the pact between our powers, which says that the Hesea of the Sanctuary visits not the territory of Kaloon, save in war. Also their coming is otherwise appointed."

CHAPTER IX.

THE COURT OF KALOON.

HORRIFIED, sick at heart, we continued our journey. No wonder that the Khania hated this mad despot. And this woman was in love with Leo; and this lunatic Khan, her husband, was a victim to jealousy, which he avenged after the very unpleasant fashion that we had witnessed! Truly an agreeable prospect for all of us! Yet, I could not help reflecting, as an object lesson that horrid scene had its advantages.

Now we reached the place where the river forked at the end of the island, and disembarked upon a quay. Here a guard of men, commanded by some household officer, was waiting to receive us. They led us through a gate in the high wall—for the town was fortified—up a narrow, stone-paved street which ran between houses apparently of the usual Central Asian type, and, so far as I could judge by moonlight, with no pretensions to architectural beauty, and not large in size.

Clearly our arrival was expected and excited interest, for people were gathered in knots about the street to watch us pass; also at the windows of the houses, and even on their flat roofs. At the top of the long street came a sort of market-place, crossing which, accompanied by a curious crowd who made remarks about us that we could not understand, we reached a gate in an inner wall. Here we were challenged, but at a word from Simbri it opened, and we passed through to find ourselves in gardens. Following a road or drive, we came to a large, rambling house or palace, surmounted by high towers and very solidly built of stone in a heavy bastard Egyptian style.

Beyond its doorway we found ourselves in a courtyard surrounded by a kind of

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verandah from which short passages led to different rooms. Down one of these passages we were conducted by the officer to an apartment—or, rather, a suite—consisting of a sitting- and two bed-chambers, which were panelled, richly furnished in rather barbaric fashion, and well lighted with primitive oil-lamps.

Here Simbri left us, saying that the officer would wait in the outer room to conduct us to the dining-hall as soon as we were ready. Then we entered the bed-chambers, where we found servants, or slaves, quiet-mannered, obsequious men. These valets changed our footgear, and taking off our heavy travelling robes, replaced them with others fashioned like civilised frock-coats, but made of some white material and trimmed with a beautiful ermine fur.

Having dressed us in these, they bowed to show that our toilet was finished, and led us to the large outer room where the officer awaited us. He conducted us through several other rooms, all of them spacious and apparently unoccupied, to a great hall lit with many lamps, and warmed—for the nights were still cold—with large peat fires. The roof of this hall was flat, and supported by thick, stone columns with carved capitals, and its walls were hung with worked tapestries that gave it an air of considerable comfort.

At the head of the hall on a *daïs* stood a long, narrow table, spread with a cloth and set with platters and cups of silver. Here we waited till butlers with wands appeared through some curtains, which they drew. Then came a man beating a silver gong, and after him a dozen or more courtiers, all dressed in white robes like ourselves, followed by perhaps as many ladies, some of them young and good-looking, and for the most part of a fair type, with well-cut features, though others were rather yellow-skinned. They bowed to us, and we to them.

Then there was a pause while we studied one another, till a trumpet blew, and, heralded by footmen in a kind of yellow livery, two figures were seen advancing down the passage beyond the curtains, preceded by the Shaman Simbri and followed by other officers. They were the Khan and the Khania of Kaloon.

No one looking at this Khan as he entered his dining-hall clad in festal white attire would have imagined him to be the same raving human brute whom we had just seen urging on his devilish hounds to tear a fellow-creature and a helpless horse to fragments and devour them. Now he seemed a heavy, loutish man, very strongly built, and not ill-looking, but with shifty eyes, evidently a person of dulled intellect, whom one would have thought incapable of keen emotions of any kind. The Khania need not be described. She was as she had been in the chambers of the Gate, only more weary-looking; indeed, her eyes had a haunted air, and it was easy to see that the events of the previous night had left their mark upon her mind. At the sight of us she flushed a little, then beckoned to us to advance, and said to her husband—

"My lord, these are the strangers of whom I have told you."

His dull eyes fell upon me first, and my appearance seemed to amuse him vaguely; at any rate, he laughed rudely, saying in barbarous Greek mixed with words from the local *patois*—

"What a curious old animal! I have never seen you before, have I?"

"No, great Khan," I answered; "but I have seen you out hunting this night. Did you have good sport?"

Instantly he became wide awake and answered, rubbing his hands—

"Excellent! He gave us a fine run; but my little dogs caught him at last, and then——" and he snapped his powerful jaws together.

"Cease your brutal talk!" broke in his wife fiercely, and he slunk away from her, and in so doing stumbled against Leo, who was waiting to be presented to him.

The sight of this great, golden-bearded man seemed to astonish him, for he stared at him, then asked—

"Are you the Khania's other friend whom she went to see in the mountains of the Gate? Then I could not understand why she took so much trouble, but now I do. Well, be careful, or I shall have to hunt you also."

Now Leo grew angry and was about to reply, but I laid my hand upon his arm and said in English—

"Don't answer; the man is mad."

"Bad, you mean," grumbled Leo; "and if he tries to set his cursed dogs on me, I will break his neck!"

Then the Khania motioned to Leo to take a seat beside her, placing me upon her other hand, between herself and her uncle, the Guardian, while the Khan shuffled to a chair a little way down the table, where he called two of the prettiest ladies to keep him company.

Such was our introduction to the Court of Kaloon. As for the meal that followed, it

"We disembarked upon a quay."

was very plentiful, but coarse, consisting for the most part of fish, mutton, and sweetmeats, all of them presented upon huge silver platters. Also much strong drink was served, a kind of spirit distilled from grain, of which nearly all present drank more than was good for them. After a few words to me about our journey, the Khania turned to Leo and talked to him for the rest of the evening, while I devoted myself to the old Shaman Simbri.

Put briefly, the substance of what I learned from him then and afterwards was as follows—

Trade was unknown to the people of Kaloon, for the reason that all communication with the south had been cut off for ages, the bridges that once existed over the chasm having been allowed to rot away. Their land, which was very large and densely inhabited, was ringed round with unclimbable mountains, except to the north, where stood the great Fire Peak. The slopes of this Peak, and an unvisited expanse of country behind that ran up to the confines of a desert, were the home of ferocious mountain tribes, untamable highlanders, who killed every stranger they caught. Consequently, although the precious and other metals were mined to a certain extent and manufactured into articles of use and ornament, money did not exist among the peoples either of the Plain or of the Mountain, all business being transacted on the principle of barter, and even the revenue collected in kind.

Amongst the tens of thousands of the aborigines of Kaloon dwelt a mere handful of a ruling class, who were said to be—and probably were—descended from the conquerors that appeared in the time of Alexander. Their blood, however, was now much mixed with that of the first inhabitants, who, to judge from their appearance and the yellow hue of their descendants, must have belonged to some branch of the great Tartar race. The government, if so it could be called, was, on the whole, of a mild though of a very despotic nature, and vested in an hereditary Khan or Khania, according as a man or a woman might be in the most direct descent.

Of religions there were two—that of the people, who worshipped the Spirit of the Fire Mountain, and that of the rulers, who believed in magic, ghosts, and divinations. Even this shadow of a religion, if so it can be called, was dying out, like its followers; for, generation by generation, the white lords grew less in number or became absorbed in the bulk of the people.

Still their rule was tolerated. I asked Simbri why, seeing that they were so few. He shrugged his shoulders and answered, because it suited the country of which the natives had no ambition. Moreover, the present Khania, our hostess, was the last of the direct line of rulers, her husband and cousin having less of the blood royal in his veins, and as such the people were attached to her.

Also, as is commonly the case with bold and beautiful women, she was popular among them, especially as she was just and very liberal to the poor. These were many, as the country was over-populated, which accounted for its wonderful state of cultivation. Lastly, they trusted to her skill and courage to defend them from the continual attacks of the Mountain tribes who raided their crops and herds. Their one grievance against her was that she had no child to whom the khanship could descend; which meant that after her death, as had happened after that of her father, there would be struggles for the succession.

"Indeed," added Simbri with meaning, and glancing at Leo out of the corners of his eyes, "the folk say openly that it would be a good thing if the Khan, who oppresses them and whom they hate, should die, so that the Khania might take another husband while she is still young. Although he is mad, he knows this, and that is why he is so jealous of any lord who looks at her, as, friend Holly, you saw to-night. For should such a one gain her favour, Rassen thinks that it would mean his death."

"Also he may be attached to his wife," I suggested, speaking in a whisper.

"Perhaps so," answered Simbri; "but if so, she loves not him, nor any of these men," and he glanced round the hall.

Certainly they did not look lovable, for by this time most of them were half drunk, while even the women seemed to have taken as much as was good for them. The Khan himself presented a sorry spectacle; for he was leaning back in his chair, shouting something about his hunting, in a thick voice. The arm of one of his pretty companions was round his neck, while the other gave him to drink from a gold cup, some of the contents of which had been spilt down his white robe.

Just then Atene looked round and saw him, and an expression of hatred and contempt gathered on her beautiful face.

"See," I heard her say to Leo, "see the companion of my days, and learn what it is to be Khania of Kaloon."

"Then why do you not cleanse your Court?" he asked.

"Because, lord, if I did so, there would be no Court left. Swine will to their mire, and these men and women, who live in idleness upon the toil of the humble folk, will to their liquor and vile luxury. Well, the end is near, for it is killing them, and their children are but few; weakly also, for the ancient blood grows thin and stale. But you are weary and would rest. To-morrow we will ride together," and calling to an officer, she bade him conduct us to our rooms.

So we rose and, accompanied by Simbri, bowed to her and went, she standing and gazing after us, a royal and pathetic figure in the midst of all that dissolute revelry. The Khan rose also, and in his cunning fashion understood something of the meaning of it all.

"You think us gay!" he shouted. "And why should we not be who do not know how long we have to live? But you yellow-haired fellow, you must not let Atene look at you like that. I tell you she is my wife; and if you do, I shall certainly have to hunt you."

At this drunken sally the courtiers roared with laughter; but taking Leo by the arm, Simbri hurried him from the hall.

"Friend," said Leo, when we were outside, "it seems to me that this Khan of yours threatens my life."

"Have no fear, lord," answered the Guardian; "so long as the Khania does not threaten it, you are safe. She is the real ruler of this land, and I stand next to her."

"Then, I pray you, keep me out of the way of that drunken man; for, look you, if I am attacked, I defend myself."

"And who can blame you?" Simbri replied, with one of his slow, mysterious smiles.

Then we parted, and having placed both our beds in one chamber, slept soundly enough, for we were very tired, till we were awakened in the morning by the baying of those horrible death-hounds, being fed, I suppose, in a place near by.

* * * *

Now in this city of Kaloon it was our weary destiny to dwell for three long months, one of the most hateful times, perhaps, that we ever passed in all our lives. Indeed, compared to it, our endless wanderings amid the Central Asian snows and deserts were but pleasure pilgrimages, and our stay at the monastery beyond the mountains a sojourn in Paradise. To set out its record in full would be both tedious and useless, so I will only tell briefly of our principal adventures.

On the morrow of our arrival, the Khania Atene sent us two beautiful white horses of pure and ancient blood, and at noon we mounted them and went out to ride with her, accompanied by a guard of soldiers. First she led us to the kennels where the death-hounds were kept, great flagged courts surrounded by iron bars, in which were narrow, locked gates. Never have I seen brutes so large and fierce; the mastiffs of Thibet were but as lapdogs compared to them. They were red and black, smooth-coated, and with a bloodhound head, and the moment they saw us they came ravening and leaping at the bars as an angry wave leaps against a rock.

These hounds were in the charge of men of certain families, who had tended them for generations. They obeyed their keepers and the Khan readily enough, but no stranger might venture near them. Also these brutes were the executioners of the land, for to them all murderers and other criminals were thrown, and with them, as we had seen, the Khan hunted any who had incurred his displeasure. Moreover, they were used for a more innocent purpose, the chasing of certain great bucks which were preserved in woods and swamps of reeds. Thus it came about that they were a terror to the country, since no man knew but what in the end he might be devoured by them. "Going to the dogs" is a term full of meaning in any land, but in Kaloon it had a significance that was terrible.

After we had looked at the hounds, not without a prophetic shudder, we rode round the walls of the town, which were laid out as a kind of *boulevard*, where the inhabitants walked and took their pleasure in the evenings. On these, however, there was not much to see except the river beneath and the plain beyond; moreover, though they were thick and high, there were places in them that must be passed carefully, for, like everything else with which the effete ruling class had to do, they had been allowed to fall into disrepair.

The town itself was an uninteresting place also, for the most part peopled by hangers-on of the Court. So we were not sorry when we crossed the river by a high-pitched bridge—where in days to come I was destined to behold one of the strangest sights ever seen by mortal man—and rode out into the country. Here all was different, for we found ourselves among the husbandmen,

who were the descendants of the original owners of the land and lived upon its produce. Every available inch of soil seemed to be cultivated by the aid of a wonderful system of irrigation. Indeed, water was lifted to levels where it would not flow naturally, by means of wheels turned by mules, or even in some places carried up by the women, who bore poles on their shoulders to which were balanced buckets.

Leo asked the Khania what happened if there was a bad season. She replied grimly that famine happened, in which thousands of people perished, and that after the famine came pestilence. These famines were periodical, and were it not for them, she added, the people would long ago have been driven to kill each other like hungry rats, since having no outlet and increasing so rapidly, the land, large as it was, could not hold them all.

"Will this be a good year?" I asked.

"It is feared not," she answered; "for the river has not risen well, and but few rains have fallen. Also the light that shone last night on the Fire Mountain is thought to be a bad omen, which means, they say, that the Spirit of the Mountain is angry, and that drought will follow. Let us hope they will not say also that this is because strangers have visited the land, bringing with them bad luck."

"If so," said Leo, with a laugh, "we shall have to fly to the Mountain to take refuge there."

"Do you, then, wish to take refuge in death?" she asked darkly. "Of this be sure, my guest, that never while I live shall you be allowed to cross the river which borders the slopes of yonder peak."

"Why not, Khania?"

"Because, my lord Leo—that is your name, is it not?—such is my will; and while I rule here, my will is law. Come, let us turn homewards."

* * * * *

That night we did not eat in the great hall, but in the room which adjoined our bedchambers. We were not left alone, however, for the Khania and her uncle, the Shaman, who always attended her, joined our meal. When we greeted them wondering, she said briefly that it was arranged thus because she refused to expose us to more insults. She added that a festival had begun which would last for a week, and that she did not wish us to see how vile were the ways of her people.

That evening, and many others which followed it—we never dined in the central hall again—passed pleasantly enough, for the Khania made Leo tell her of England, where he was born, and of the lands that he had visited, their peoples and customs. I spoke also of the history of Alexander, whose general Rassen, her far-off forefather, conquered the country of Kaloon, and of the land of Egypt, whence the latter came; and so it went on till midnight, while Atene listened to us greedily, her eyes fixed always on Leo's face.

Many such nights did we spend thus in the Palace of the city of Kaloon, where, in fact, we were close prisoners. But oh! the days hung heavy on our hands. If we went into the courtyard or reception-rooms of the palace, the lords and their followers gathered round us and pestered us with questions, for, being very idle, they were also very curious.

Also the women, some of whom were fair enough, began to talk to us on this pretext or on that, and did their best to make love to Leo; for, in contrast with their slim, delicate-looking men, they found this deep-chested, yellow-haired stranger to their taste. Indeed, they troubled him much with gifts of flowers and messages sent by servants or soldiers, making assignations with him, which, of course, he did not keep.

If we went out into the streets, matters were as bad, for then the people ceased from their business, such as it was, and followed us about, staring at us till we took refuge again in the Palace gardens.

There remained, therefore, only our rides in the country with the Khania; but after three or four of them, these came to an end, owing to the jealousy of the Khan, who vowed that if we went out together any more, he would follow with the death-hounds. So we must ride alone, if at all, in the centre of a large guard of soldiers sent to see that we did not attempt to escape, and accompanied very often by a mob of peasants, who with threats and entreaties demanded that we should give back the rain which they said we had taken from them. For now the great drought had begun in earnest.

Thus it came about that at length our only resource was making pretence to fish in the river, where the water was so clear and low that we could catch nothing, watching the while the Fire Mountain, that loomed in the distance mysterious and unreachable, and vainly racking our brains for plans to escape thither, or at least to communicate with its priestess, of whom we could learn no more.

For two great burdens lay upon our souls—

"'Are you the Khania's other friend?'"

the burden of desire to continue our search and to meet with its reward, which we were sure that we should pluck amid the snows of yonder peak, if we could but come there; and the burden of approaching catastrophe at the hands of the Khania Atene. She had made no love to Leo since that night in the Gateway, and, indeed, even if she had wished to, this would have been difficult, since I took care that he was never left for one hour alone. No *duenna* could have clung to a Spanish princess more closely than I did to Leo.

Yet I could see well that her passion was no whit abated; that it grew day by day, indeed, as the fire swells in the heart of a volcano, and that soon it must break loose and spread its ruin round. The omen of it was to be read in her words, her gestures, and her tragic eyes.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE SHAMAN'S CHAMBER.

ONE night Simbri asked us to dine with him in his own apartments in the highest tower of the Palace—had we but known it, for us a fateful place indeed, for here the last act of the mighty drama was destined to be fulfilled. So we went, glad enough of any change. When we had eaten, Leo grew very thoughtful, then said suddenly—

"Friend Simbri, I wish to ask a favour of you—that you will beg the Khania to let us go our ways."

Instantly the Shaman's cunning old face became like a mask of ivory.

"Surely you had better ask your favours of the lady herself, lord. I do not think that any in reason will be refused to you," he replied.

"Let us stop fencing," said Leo, "and consider the facts. It has seemed to me that the Khania Atene is not happy with her husband."

"Your eyes are very keen, lord, and who shall say that they have deceived you?"

"It has seemed, further," went on Leo, reddening, "that she has been so good as to look on me with—some undeserved regard."

"Ah! perhaps you guessed that in the Gatehouse yonder, if you have not forgotten what most men would remember."

"I remember certain things, Simbri, that have to do with her and you."

The Shaman only stroked his beard and said "Proceed!"

"There is little to add, Simbri, except that I am not minded to bring scandal on the name of the first lady in your land."

"Nobly said, lord, nobly said, though here they do not trouble much about such things. But how if the matter could be managed without scandal? If, for instance, the Khania chose to take another husband, the whole land would rejoice, for she is the last of her royal race."

"How can she take another husband when she has one living?"

"True; indeed, that is a question which I have considered, but the answer to it is that men die. It is the common lot, and the Khan has been drinking very heavily of late."

"You mean that men can be murdered," said Leo angrily. "Well, I will have nothing to do with such a crime. Do you understand me?"

As the words passed his lips I heard a rustle and turned my head. Behind us were curtains beyond which the Shaman slept, kept his instruments of divination, and worked out his horoscopes. Now they had been drawn, and between them, in her royal array, stood the Khania, still as a statue.

"Who was it that spoke of crime?" she asked in a cold voice. "Was it you, my lord Leo?"

Rising from his chair, he faced her and said—

"Lady, I am glad that you have heard my words, even if they should vex you."

"Why should it vex me to learn that there is one honest man in this Court who will have naught to do with murder? Nay, I honour you for those words. Know also that no such foul thoughts have come near to me. Yet, Leo Vincey, that which is written—is written."

"Doubtless, Khania; but what is written?"

"Tell him, Shaman."

Now Simbri passed behind the curtain and returned thence with a roll from which he read: "The heavens have declared by their signs infallible that before the next new moon the Khan Rassen will lie dead at the hands of the stranger lord who came to this country from across the mountains."

"Then the heavens have declared a lie," said Leo contemptuously.

"That is as you will," answered Atene; "but so it must befall—not by my hand or those of my servants, but by yours. And then?"

"Why by mine? Why not by Holly's? Yet, if so, then doubtless I shall suffer the punishment of my crime at the hands of his mourning widow," he replied, exasperated.

"You are pleased to mock me, Leo Vincey, well knowing what a husband this man is to me."

Now I felt that the crisis had come, and so did Leo, for he looked her in the face and said—

"Speak on, lady—say all you wish; perhaps it will be better for us both."

"I obey you, lord. Of the beginning of this fate I know nothing, but I read from the first page that is open to me. It has to do with this present life of mine. Learn, Leo Vincey, that from my childhood onwards you have haunted me. Oh! when first I saw you yonder by the river, your face was not strange to me, for I knew it—I knew it well in dreams. When I was a little maid, and slept one day amidst the flowers by the river's brim, it came first to me—ask my uncle here if this be not so, though it is true that your face was younger then. Afterwards again and again I saw it in my sleep, and learned to know that you were mine, for the magic of my heart taught me this.

"Then passed the long years while I felt that you were drawing near to me—slowly, very slowly, but ever drawing nearer, wending onward and outward through the peoples of the world; across the hills, across the plains, across the sands, across the snows, on to my side. At length came the end, for one night not three moons ago, whilst this wise man, my uncle, and I sat together here studying the lore that he has taught me, and striving to wring its secrets from the past, a vision came to me.

"Look you, I was lost in a charmed sleep which looses the spirit from the body and gives it strength to stray afar and to see those things that have been and that are yet to be. Then I saw you and your companion clinging to a point of broken ice, over the river of the gulf. I do not lie; it is written here upon the scroll. Yes, it was you, the man of my dreams, and no other; and we knew the place and hurried thither and waited by the water, thinking that perhaps beneath it you lay dead.

"Then, while we waited, lo! two tiny figures appeared far above the icy tongue that no man may climb, and oh! you know the rest. Spellbound we stood and saw you slip and hang, saw you sever the thin cord and rush downwards—yes, and saw that brave man, Holly, leap headlong after you.

"But mine was the hand that drew you from the torrent, where otherwise you must have drowned—you, the love of the long past and of to-day—aye, and of all time. Yes, you and no other, Leo Vincey. It was this spirit that foresaw your danger, and this hand which delivered you from death; and —and would you refuse them now, when I, the Khania of Kaloon, proffer them to you?"

So she spoke, and leaned upon the table, looking up into his face with lips that trembled and with appealing eyes.

"Lady," said Leo, "you saved me, and again I thank you, though perhaps it would have been better if you had let me drown. But—forgive me the question—if all this tale be true, why did you marry another man?"

Now she shrank back as though a knife had pricked her.

"Oh! blame me not," she moaned. "It was but policy which bound me to this madman, whom I ever loathed. They urged me to it; yes, even you, Simbri, my uncle—and for that deed accursed be your head!—urged me, saying that it was necessary to end the war between Rassen's faction and my own. That I was the last of the true race, moreover, which must be carried on; saying also that my dreams and my rememberings were but sick phantasies. So, alas! alas! I yielded, thinking to make my people great."

"And yourself the greatest of them, if all I hear is true," commented Leo bluntly, for he was determined to end this thing. "Well, I do not blame you, Khania, although now you tell me that I must cut a knot you tied, by taking the life of this husband of your own choice; for so, forsooth, it is decreed by Fate, that Fate which *you* have shaped. Yes, I must do what you will not do, and kill him. Also your tale of the decree of the heavens, and of that vision which led you to the precipice to save us, is false. Lady, you met me by the river because the 'mighty' Hesea, the Spirit of the Mountain, so commanded you."

"How know you that?" Atene said, springing up and facing him, while the jaw of old Simbri dropped, and the eyelids blinked over his glazed eyes.

"In the same way that I know much else. Lady, it would have been better if you had spoken all the truth."

Now Atene's face went ashen and her cheeks sank in.

"Who told you?" she whispered. "Was it you, magician?" and she turned upon her uncle like a snake about to strike. "Oh! if so, be sure that I shall learn it; and though we are of one blood and have loved each other, I will pay you back in agony."

"Atene, Atene!" Simbri broke in, holding

up his clawlike hands, "you know well it was not I!"

"Then it was you, you ape-faced wanderer, you messenger of the evil gods! Oh! why did I not kill you at the first? Well, that fault can be remedied."

"Lady," I said blandly, "am I also a magician?"

"Aye," she answered, "I think that you are, and that you have a mistress who dwells in fire."

"Then, Khania," I said, "such servants and such mistresses are ill to meddle with. Say, what answer has the Hesea sent to your report of our coming to this land?"

"Listen," broke in Leo before she could reply. "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire."

Atene listened and for a while stood silent, perhaps because she had no answer. Then she said with a little laugh—

"Is that your will? Well, I think that yonder are none whom you would wish to wed. There is fire and to spare, but no lovely, shameless spirit haunts it to drive men mad with evil longings"; and as though at some secret thought, a spasm of pain crossed her face and caught her breath. Then she went on in the same cold voice—

"Wanderers, this land has its secrets, into which no foreigner must pry. I say to you yet again that while I live, you set no foot upon that Mountain. Know also, Leo Vincey, I have bared my heart to you, and I have been told in answer that this long quest of yours is not for me, as I was sure in my folly, but, as I think, for some demon wearing the shape of woman, whom you will never find. Now I make no prayer to you; it is not fitting—but you have learned too much.

"Therefore, consider well to-night, and before next sundown answer. Having offered, I do not go back, and to-morrow you shall tell me whether you will take me when the time comes—as come it must—and rule this land and be great and happy in my love, or whether, you and your familiar together, you will—die. Choose, then, between the vengeance of Atene and her love, since I am not minded to be mocked in my own land as a wanton who sought a stranger and was—refused."

Slowly, slowly, in an intense whisper she spoke the words, that fell, one by one, from her lips like drops of blood from a death-wound, and there followed silence. Never shall I forget the scene. There the old wizard watched us through his horny eyes, that blinked like those of some night-bird. There stood the imperial woman in her royal robes, with icy rage written on her face and vengeance in her glance. There, facing her, was the great form of Leo, quiet, alert, determined, holding back his doubts and fears with the iron hand of will. And there to the right was I, noting all things and wondering how long I, "the familiar," who had earned Atene's hate, would be left alive upon the earth.

Thus we stood, watching each other, till suddenly I noted that the flame of the lamp above us flickered, and felt a draught strike upon my face. Then I looked round and became aware of another presence. For yonder in the shadow was the tall form of a man. See! it shambled forward silently, and I saw that its feet were naked. Now it reached the ring of the lamplight and burst into a savage laugh.

It was the Khan.

Atene, his wife, looked up and saw him, and never did I admire that passionate woman's boldness more, who admired little else about her save her beauty, for her face showed neither anger nor fear, but contempt only. And yet she had some cause to be afraid, as she well knew.

"What do you here, Rassen?" she asked, "creeping on me with your naked feet? Get you back to your drink and the ladies of your Court."

But he still laughed on, a hyæna laugh.

"What have you heard," she said, "that makes you so merry?"

"What have I heard?" Rassen gurgled out between his screams of hideous glee. "Oho! I have heard the Khania, the last of the true blood, the first in the land, the proud princess who will not let her robes be soiled by those of the 'ladies of the Court,' and my wife, my wife, who asked me to marry her—mark that, you strangers—because I was her cousin and a rival ruler, and the richest lord in all the land, and thereby she thought she would increase her power—I have heard her offer herself to a nameless wanderer with a great yellow beard, and I have heard him, who hates and would escape from her"—here he screamed with laughter—"refuse her in such a fashion as I would not refuse the lowest woman in the palace!

"I have heard also—but that I always knew—that I am mad; for, strangers, I was

"'I saw you born, the son of an evil woman.'"

made mad by a hate-philtre which that old Rat," and he pointed to Simbri, "gave me in my drink—yes, at my marriage-feast. It worked well, for truly there is no one whom I hate more than the Khania Atene. Why, I cannot bear her touch, it makes me sick. I loathe to be in the same room with her; she taints the air; there is a smell of sorceries about her.

"It seems that it takes you thus also, Yellow-beard? Well, if so, ask the old Rat for a love-drink; he can mix it, and then you will think her sweet and sound and fair, and spend some few months jollily enough. Man, don't be a fool! the cup that is thrust into your hands looks goodly. Drink, drink deep. You'll never guess the liquor's bad—till to-morrow—though it be mixed with a husband's poisoned blood!" and again Rassen screamed in his unholy mirth.

To all these bitter insults, venomed with the sting of truth, Atene listened without a word. Then she turned to us and bowed.

"My guests," she said, "I pray you pardon me for all I cannot help. You have strayed to a corrupt and evil land, and there stands its crown and flower. Khan Rassen, your doom is written, and I do not hasten it, because once for a little while we were near to each other, though you have been naught to me for this many a year save a snake that haunts my house. Were it otherwise, the next cup you drank should still your madness and that vile tongue of yours which gives its venom voice. My uncle, come with me. Your hand, for I grow weak with shame and woe."

The old Shaman hobbled forward; but when he came face to face with the Khan, he stopped and looked him up and down with his dim eyes. Then he said—

"Rassen, I saw you born, the son of an evil woman, and your father none knew but I. The flame flared that night upon the Fire Mountain, and the stars hid their faces, for none of them would own you—no, not even those of the most evil influence. I saw you wed and rise drunken from your marriage-feast, your arm round a wanton's neck. I have seen you rule, wasting the land for your cruel pleasure, turning the fertile fields into great parks for your game, leaving those who tilled them to starve upon the road or drown themselves in ditches for very misery. And soon, soon I shall see you die in pain and blood, and then the chain will fall from the neck of this noble lady whom you revile, and another more worthy shall take your place and rear up children to fill your throne, and the land shall have rest again."

Now I listened to these words—and none who did not hear them can guess the fearful bitterness with which they were spoken—expecting every moment that the Khan would draw the short sword at his side and cut the old man down. But he did not; he cowered before him like a dog before some savage master the weight of whose whip he knows. Yes, answering nothing, he shrank into the corner and cowered there, while Simbri, taking Atene by the hand, went from the room. At its massive, iron-bound door he turned and, pointing to the crouching figure with his staff, said—

"Khan Rassen, I raised you up, and now I cast you down. Remember me when you lay dying—in blood and pain!"

Their footsteps died away, and the Khan crept from his corner, looking about him furtively.

"Have that Rat and the other gone?" he asked of us, wiping his damp brow with his sleeve; and I saw that fear had sobered him and that for awhile the madness had left his eyes.

I answered that they had gone.

"You think me a coward," he went on passionately, "and it is true I am afraid of him and her—as you, Yellow-beard, will be afraid when your turn comes. I tell you that they sapped my strength and crazed me with their drugged drink, making me the thing I am; for who can war against their wizardries? Look you now. Once I was a prince, the lord of half this land, noble of form and upright of heart, and I loved her cursed beauty as all must love it on whom she turns her eyes. And she turned them on me, she sought *me* in marriage; it was that old Rat who bore her message.

"So I stayed the great war and married the Khania and became the Khan; but better had it been for me if I had crept into her kitchen as a scullion, than into her chamber as a husband. For from the first she hated me; and the more I loved, the more she hated, till at our wedding-feast she doctored me with that poison which made me loathe her, and thus divorced us; which made me mad also, eating into my brain like fire."

"If she hated you so sorely, Khan," I asked, "why did she not mix a stronger draught and have done with you?"

"Why? Because of policy, for I ruled half the land. Because it suited her also that I should live on, a thing to mock at,

since while I was alive no other husband could be forced upon her by the people. For she is not a woman, she is a witch, who desires to live alone, or so I thought until to-night"—and he glowered at Leo.

"She knew also that although I must shrink from her, I still love her in my heart, and can still be jealous, and therefore that I should protect her from all men. It was she who set me on that lord whom my dogs tore awhile ago, because he was powerful and sought her favour and would not be denied. But now," and again he glowered at Leo, "now I know why she has always seemed so cold. It is because there lived a man to melt whose ice she husbanded her fire."

Then Leo, who all this while had stood silent, stepped forward.

"Listen, Khan," he said. "Did the ice seem like melting a little while ago?"

"No—unless you lied. But that was only because the fire is not yet hot enough. Wait awhile until it burns up, and melt you must, for who can match his will against Atene?"

"And what if the ice desires to flee the fire? Khan, they said that I should kill you, but I do not seek your blood. You think that I would rob you of your wife, yet I have no such thought towards her. We desire to escape this town of yours, but cannot, because its gates are locked, and we are prisoners, guarded night and day. Hear me, then. You have the power to set us free and to be rid of us."

The Khan looked at him cunningly.

"And if I set you free, whither would you go? You could tumble down yonder gorge, but only the birds can climb its heights."

"To the Fire Mountain, where we have business."

Rassen stared at him.

"Is it I who am mad, or are you, who wish to visit the Fire Mountain? Yet that is nothing to me, save that I do not believe you. But if so, you might return again and bring others with you. Perchance, having its lady, you wish this land also by right of conquest. It has foes up yonder."

"It is not so," answered Leo earnestly. "As one man to another, I tell you it is not so. I ask no smile of your wife and no acre of your soil. Be wise and help us to be gone, and live on undisturbed in such fashion as may please you."

The Khan stood still awhile, swinging his long arms vacantly, till something seemed to come into his mind that moved him to merriment, for he burst into one of his hideous laughs.

"I am thinking," he said, "what Atene would say if she woke up to find her sweet bird flown. She would search for you and be angry with me."

"It seems that she cannot be angrier than she is," I answered. "Give us a night's start, and let her search never so closely, she shall not find us."

"You forget, wanderer, that she and her old Rat have arts. Those who knew where to meet you might know where to seek you. And yet—and yet—it would be rare to see her rage. 'Oh, Yellow-beard, where are you, Yellow-beard?'" he went on, mimicking his wife's voice. "'Come back and let me melt your ice, Yellow-beard.'"

Again he laughed; then said suddenly—

"When can you be ready?"

"In half an hour," I answered.

"Good. Go to your chambers and prepare. I will join you there presently."

So we went.

(*To be continued.*)

THE DAFFODILS.

THE dead remember all the beauteous hours
Perfect with joy, but now long fled, alas!
And their glad dreams, amid the spring-time showers,
Whiten the hills and every wayside pass.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

SOME WALKING ENCYCLOPÆDIAS.

DESCRIBED AND PICTURED BY

HARRY FURNISS.

A FEW years ago, I was strolling up to Hampstead, in company with a Scotch friend, when we met the late Sir Walter Besant striding down from his house near the Heath to his office in Soho, where he was at work upon his wonderful book on London. Sir Walter and I chatted for a moment or two about the subject of the book; and when I rejoined my Scotch friend, he asked me who my energetic acquaintance was.

"Sir Walter Besant," I replied: "the novelist, you know, and the great authority on the history of London. He is awfully interesting, a veritable walking encyclopædia."

My Scotch friend nodded slowly and approvingly, but for some time made no remark. At length he said: "Eh, mon, I tak it Sir Walter is jest walkin' for a wager."

Sir Walter is, alas! no more, but there are other "walking encyclopædias." I might take a dozen names at random, to illustrate the meaning, in mouths of the vulgar, of the term "walking encyclopædia," as I applied it to Sir Walter in talking to my friend, who no doubt still thinks of him as a pedestrian only, and is still angry with me for trying to explain that the greater Sir Walter has also been called a walking encyclopædia. But there are a few men, in different walks of literature, to whom it might also be applied.

Perhaps, however, Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D., has a better right to the title given at the head of this article than any other notability among those to whom I am about to refer. For not only has Dr. Garnett contributed very liberally to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and edited the general catalogue of the British Museum, but it has often been said of Dr. Garnett that there is no question of research you can put to him that he cannot answer. There is abundant proof that he is a veritable walking encyclopædia; but this fact was demonstrated to me by a friend of mine, who had spent years over a peculiar subject, of which but very few people have any knowledge at all. He searched for months in Continental libraries for some information on one particular point, without effect. So, coming to London, he asked Dr. Garnett if he had ever heard of the subject, and whether he could put him on the track to find out that obscure piece of information.

THE LATE SIR WALTER BESANT.

"We have only one book in the Museum," replied the Doctor, "touching upon that. I will send for it. You will find all you want on page 530."

Dr. Richard Garnett has not only been a keeper of books at the Museum, like his father before him, but he is a maker of them as well. "Io in Egypt" was his first attempt, published in the 'fifties; and he has published many more from time to time, among them biographies of Carlyle, Emerson, and Milton, as well as selections from other poets besides himself.

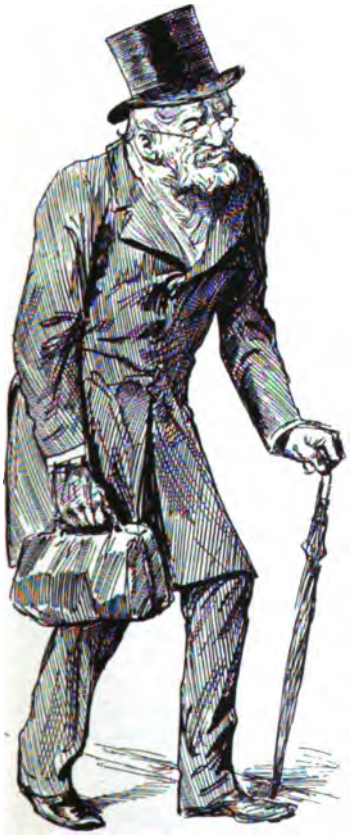
Dr. Richard Garnett generally carries a bag, and walks, when in thought, with one foot on the pavement and the other in the road.

Mentioning Dr. Garnett reminds me that, curiously enough, I was myself once mistaken for a walking encyclopædia. I was credited—

and may be still in one household, at least — with a knowledge that would certainly entitle me to take my place with the omniscient men whose portraits I introduce into this selected list. As will be seen, I do not mention this fact from mere egotism, but only to show that even the great Dr. Richard Garnett had once to admit his inability to answer a question asked him. It is as encouraging to those endowed, in a lesser degree, with skill in the game of knowing everything, to find that it is possible for a champion to be cornered, as it is to the amateur cricketer to find a Grace out first ball, or for a golfer to see a Varden foozle his drive. It shows that no man, not even a Garnett, is infallible, and therefore comforts us in our acknowledged fallibility, with the feeling that if we cannot boast of being like those great ones, at least we may feel that they are like us. My little joke also shows how easy it is for men who are really quacks to get a reputation as experts.

It came about in this way. I happened to be a guest at a country house in which

SIR CASPAR PURDON CLARKE.



DR. RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.

the family were advocates of the higher education of women, and one daughter was a veritable blue-stocking. She is now the wife of a learned Professor, with whom she was not even acquainted at the time—and that is why I come in. For some reason she had got it into her head that I was a walking encyclopædia. Perhaps the mistake was due to a want of insight into character, or an absence of any sense of humour. Anyway, I received a letter from her, shortly after I returned to London, in which she informed me that she had lost the opportunity of asking me to explain something (I quite forget now in what branch of learning) that she had read, which was so obscure she could not unravel it. I recollect it was so deep a subject that I could not even understand the question, much less attempt a reply to it. But I was not going to give myself away, so I called upon Dr. Garnett—at that time living a few doors from me—and showed him the letter. He admitted what I should have thought impossible—that he could not reply. "Only one man can," said Dr. Garnett. "It is an abstruse subject, to which he has devoted much research in his department at the Museum. I'll hand him this with pleasure."

In a few days I received a typewritten reply, of about six lines, which was just as puzzling to me as the question to which these lines furnished the reply. I wrote to the

inquisitive blue-stocking, to thank her people for sending me some game—around which, by the way, her little note and question had been wrapped ; and, as a postscript, written in a hurried hand, I added that "at the moment of writing" it struck me that possibly the reply to her question might be—and then I copied the British Museum expert's definition, word for word.

When she married the Professor, and lived in London, I received more than one invitation to a "quiet, homely dinner." "The Professor would be so pleased to meet a kindred spirit," etc. But I never went !

The thousands who daily visit the South Kensington Museum have little idea that the most remarkable object of interest, in the whole place of wonders, walks on two legs. One may occasionally notice an energetic, bright-faced, medium-sized gentleman darting about, with papers and books in his hand, smiling pleasantly over his gold-rimmed glasses, and disappearing behind the big pieces of statuary, into an office in which he presides over every detail of England's pride. This is Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, the Director of the South Kensington Museum.

MR. J. FLETCHER MOULTON, K.C., M.P.

As to his encyclopædic knowledge, it is difficult to say what Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke does not know. Perhaps very few, if any, men now living, better deserve the name, "a walking encyclopædia," than he ; and it is only right and fitting that he should be Director of the greatest museum in the world, the temple of art treasures at South Kensington.

Sir Purdon Clarke is extraordinarily well versed in Oriental art of all kinds, as well as in much of the literature and language of the East. All art manufactures : their processes, artistic, chemical, etc. ; their secrets of manufacture, and their forgeries ; carpets, glass, china, metal-work—in fact, everything to be found in the South Kensington Museum, and much more, is indexed in the mind of Sir Purdon. There is absolutely nothing that comes within the scope of an art museum but what he knows the highways and the byways of it.

LORD KELVIN.

Of a carpet, he'll tell you what the pattern says or symbolises ; of silk, Sir Purdon will tell you all about the dyes and dodges of manufacture ; of sculpture, he knows all about architecture and carving. He is a practical architect, a chemist, a botanist, an art detective, thoroughly acquainted with stains and loads, and the theory and practice of engineering and mechanics, a good science man, who seems to know everything from the inside, and consequently a bit of a doctor. He carries other secrets in that wonderful head of his ; for he is a Freemason of high degree. Besides all this, he is an excellent speaker, a humorist—in this respect, perhaps, a *rara avis*.

In this category of walking encyclopædias, he deserves mention also on the ground of being an antiquary of excellent standing (or walking) ; and as a friend of mine, likewise a walking encyclopædia, remarked of Sir Purdon, whom he knows well : "The kindest-hearted man who ever breathed ; always ready to do favours to everybody, and placing his knowledge at the disposal of everyone who asks for it."

His work outside South Kensington is sufficient to make great the reputation of any ordinarily famous man. His large

THE RT. HON. LEONARD COURTNEY.

buildings, Alexandra House, close to the Albert Hall, and the School of Cookery, are practical pieces of work; but he has also superintended many artistic triumphs, too—for instance, the celebrated ballroom of Lord Iveagh, built of carved white marble, at a cost, it is said, of nearer £200,000 than of £100,000. He is greatly in demand in art matters in the Palace of the King, whose art collections he has catalogued. And yet, with all this work, and all these occupations and distractions crammed into the twenty-four hours, he has to find time to travel about the country and abroad to select things for purchase, from costly tapestry and carved panelling down to—well, everything else. Add to all this red-tape, official duties—the judging of everything sent into the Museum, where a twelve hours working day is an average, and you will wonder that the face of Sir Purdon is still fresh, the eyes are bright, and a smile is always on the lips. What is more, it is said of him that, if anyone seeks information, he has never been known to say: "I don't know."

There is among fighting men a term "muscle-tied"—an excessively over-trained athlete is likely to develop the muscles to such an extent that, although we may admire his strength, he cannot make full use of his power. It is the same with knowledge. Men who have studied too much—Senior Wranglers in particular—sometimes become brain-tied, and when they enter the arena to fight the battle of life, they are easily defeated by those who are quicker, more resourceful, and not over-trained.

To every rule there are exceptions, and one brilliant exception to this statement is to be seen in Mr. John Fletcher Moulton, K.C., M.P., who started in his career as two encyclopædias rolled into one; he is Senior Wrangler and the most money-making member of the Bar. Perhaps I ought to say that he led a double existence from the first—one half of it in Cambridge and the other in London. He was carrying everything before him in Cambridge University, while at the same time he was doing the same thing at London University. There was no restraining him. It is said that when he became Senior Wrangler, his marks above those necessary would have been

SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK.

sufficient to give him a Second Wranglership. It is a notorious fact that few Senior Wranglers have done much in after life; but here is a sort of double Senior Wrangler who has risen to the most remunerative practice at the Bar. Law is only an outlet for his knowledge, or part of it. He has been decorated in Paris, with the Cross of the Legion of Honour, for his expert knowledge in science, and he is a Fellow of the Royal Society on the same grounds. He is a tremendous worker—ofttimes sitting up half the night.

Talking of sitting up all night suggests my introducing the portrait of Sir Frederick Pollock, who sits up to write on the subject of law. He is a literary lawyer of the highest order, and more stock-full of legal knowledge, in its historical aspect, than all the rest of the Bench and the Bar put together. I only infer that he writes at night from an incident that once happened in a country house in which he and I were guests. Just before midnight he rose from his seat among us in the library, presumably to retire to rest; and going to the bookshelves, he rather astonished me, if not his host, who knows him better than I do, by selecting a dozen or more volumes.

"A little 'light' reading before going to sleep?" I said; and, as he was leaving the room, I asked him if he thought he could get through the small library he was taking up in his arms before the breakfast-bell rang in the morning. This direct question, coming from an ordinary individual like myself, so nonplussed Sir Frederick that he dropped the books one by one and retired bedwards, to chew the cud of his own well-stocked brain, and perhaps to produce the cream of his already well-assimilated knowledge in literary form.

I hesitated whether I should include the name of the famous Lord Kelvin in my small list of walking encyclopædias; for although admittedly one of the greatest men of the day, Lord Kelvin is more of a specialist than a man of general knowledge. Indeed, he might be held up as an illustration of how big brains are often so stocked with uncommon knowledge that there is no room in them for the common variety.

But Lord Kelvin, as regards physics, is a veritable walking encyclopædia. His submarine inventions are a boon and a blessing to the mariner, and, therefore, perhaps it would be more correct to call him a swimming encyclopædia. In one way, indeed, perhaps he is, according to his own peculiar theory, singularly adapted to be allied with the fishes; for he is of opinion that if we would follow his practice and keep both eyes nearly closed, we could then see sideways—as fishes do—and our eyes would take in a wider range of sight than by opening the lids. It may be said, to his credit, that Lord Kelvin does look at life in two ways: with one eye on science, in which he has proved himself a giant; and the other on the practical side of life, in which he has commanded a distinguished success.

Strictly speaking, encyclopædias are works of reference, to be consulted when required. This applies equally to human encyclopædias. For instance, Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke and Dr. Richard Garnett do not shout their knowledge from the housetops, any more than they hide their lights under a bushel. Theirs is the happy medium, and it is that medium not to keep all the good things to oneself, but just to impart a trifle, now and

MR. JOSEPH KNIGHT.

then, to those who are equally interested, but less learned.

That is the ideal lived up to by the accomplished scholar, the Right Hon. Leonard Courtney. It cannot be said that he hides his light under a bushel, or that he flares

it from the housetops. Yet he is not a happy medium—anything but happy—in his choice of an area to be illumined by its rays. He selected the House of Commons. Now, if there is one place more than another in which encyclopædias—except those whose

THE RT. HON. SIR CHARLES DILKE, BART., M.P.

stores of knowledge are of a kind possessed by Sir Charles Dilke—are tabooed, it is the House of Commons. Professors are failures as politicians. Two, Professors Bryce and Courtney, have made names in the House, but to a large extent that of Professor Bryce rests on his writings, notably on his great work, "The American Commonwealth." Our House of Commons will not be lectured, but it approves of lectures on other parliaments. St. Stephen's is, after all, but a glorified school, and the boys do not like schoolmasters. Mr. Leonard Courtney was not content till he presided as Chairman of Committees, and an excellent chairman he made—too excellent, in fact—as he was the only chairman, it is said, who ever understood every item of the Bill under discussion. But it was all "chair" and no sympathy. The worst of it was, in Mr. Leonard Courtney's case, that he not only was, but also *looked*, the schoolmaster or professor. Not so Professor Bryce. He, on the other hand, is an impetuous, genial encyclopædia, and is not feared, as Mr. Courtney used to be, in the House.

Mr. Joseph Knight is not a name known as well as it ought to be by the general public. As dramatic critic of the *Athenæum*, the *Globe*, and many other papers; for years as editor of *Notes and Queries;* as a writer for the "Encyclopædia Britannica"; as essayist and *facile princeps* the greatest living authority on the Drama—English or French—he claims a place among walking encyclopædias. If his name is not known to the general public (his articles not being signed), his presence is to all first-nighters at theatres. The man, a good-looking, smiling sage, is a familiar figure to all theatre-goers.

Mr. Joseph Knight is a most genial conversationalist. He does not hide his knowledge between the covers of books, but rolls it out verbally, at the dinner- and supper-table, to the delight of his friends. There are few questions he cannot show a special knowledge of, and no one has a more practical or larger experience of everything connected with the theatre, both before as well as behind the scenes. His conversations are full of interesting reminiscences.

The Right Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart., is generally acknowledged to be one of the best-informed public men of our time. This high estimate is divided between the House of Commons and the Continent. There is no question that can crop up in debate, in Parliament, that Sir Charles is not prepared to speak on with knowledge. He is always listened to with interest—not to add, so far as the Government benches are concerned, with fear—when he delivers one of his carefully reasoned and full-of-knowledge speeches. Just as other M.P.s rush off to Paris and various Continental cities for relaxation, so does he; but Sir Charles's relaxation is not one of pleasure-seeking, but found in changing one platform for another. Nor is it a platform where trippers do congregate, but a platform whence he can talk politics or give forth political essays.

It is only natural that the proprietor of the *Athenæum* should be a walking encyclopædia; and he began young, for at the age of twenty-three he graduated at Cambridge as Senior Legalist, and was immediately afterwards called to the Bar.

But it was as globe-trotter that he picked up his store of knowledge. Beginning with that young country, America, he went round

the world by New Zealand, Australia, Ceylon, and India, and wound up by that old-world country, Egypt; and the inevitable publication of volumes of travel followed. Then, bursting with knowledge of our Colonies and foreign Possessions, he fought and won Chelsea, and was the youngest man ever returned for a metropolitan constituency. And, with the exception of a few years, he has been in Parliament ever since.

Sir Charles is always trotting or walking. A curious fact about this, I noticed for years, was that he was always first through the division-lobbies—first out of the House, and first back. Why he so desired (he may be a record-breaker still) to get through first, it would be hard to tell, for there is nothing to be gained by racing through the lobbies. The walking encyclopædia's impetuosity can only be put down to irrepressible activity of mind; for it is well known that quick thinkers are quick movers. Sir Charles is in the habit of working off steam by fencing. He is one of the best fencers in London, and begins his days with the foils. His mode of progression is much like that of a walking automaton—straight head, back, and legs; walking in a style to which the term, "as if he had swallowed a poker," is generally applied. With him it should be, "as if he had swallowed a foil."

His speech is rapid, too, his voice metallic, and his orations lack effect from a purely oratorical standpoint, but from a debating and useful point of view they are most effective. The House of Commons has always an ear for any member who has something to say that he knows, and no one is surer of the ear of the House than Sir Charles.

Sir Charles Dilke has been accurately described as "the stormy petrel of politics." When he rises to address the House on foreign affairs, there is generally a storm brewing. He is looked upon abroad as a sort of unofficial Foreign Secretary, as one of the few members of the English Parliament who really know something about foreign affairs and look at Continental politics from a Continental standpoint. But his mind is essentially that of a critic, and not of a constructive statesman. Indeed, too many of our walking encyclopædias are merely sublime critics.

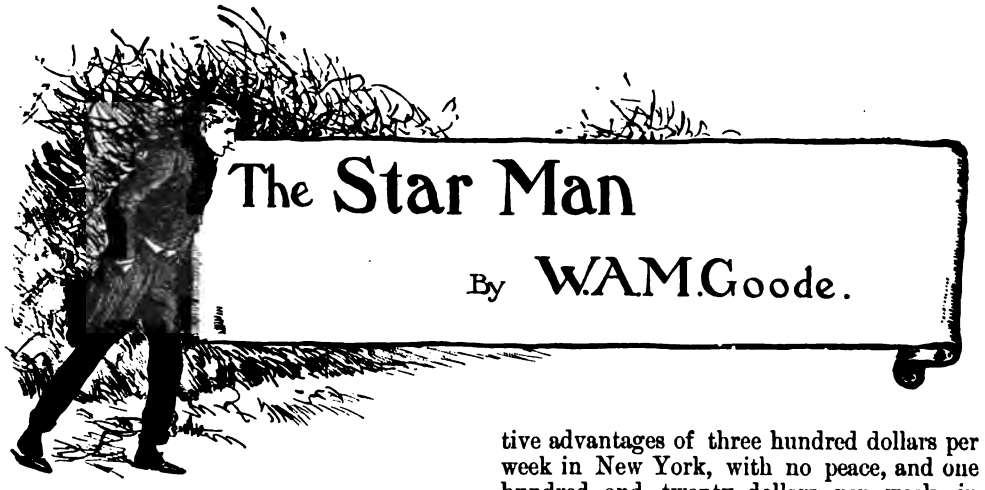
THE CHANGE.

BLINDED and winged, Love came to me—
I wondered at his guise—
"Why, he will fly with wings," quoth I,
"And blind—he is not wise."
And straightway clipped his wings and tore
The kerchief from his eyes.

I made him over to my whim—
Bereft of flight he lies;
A changeling lad, dull-eyed and sad,
Who views the world with sighs.
That was a rose-hued kerchief once
He wore across his eyes.

He may not fly, he needs must *see*—
He should be glad thereof;
It was my whim did this for him,
All carefulness to prove.
So wise and wingless he, sometime
I doubt if he be Love.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



The Star Man

By W.A.M.Goode.

A GREAT gloom lay over the office of the *Howler*. The bright light of New York's winter sunshine, which glinted upon piles of yellow flimsy after passing through the fifteenth-storey windows of a building sacred to the millions of the *Howler's* regenerator, was quite unable to dispel the feeling of infinite depression. The proprietor of the *Howler*, like most respectable owners of respectable New York papers, was in Europe, but on the afternoon of the New Year's Eve in question there were few in the office of that powerful organ who did not wish him even "further." Those more charitable—or, to speak more accurately, less responsible—modified the impious wish into a fervent desire that all cables between Europe and America might suddenly and permanently cease to perform their functions.

Even the cheekiest "copy-boy," who seven times had been "fired," and the same number of times reinstated on account of his inimitable grin, seemed to feel that this was no time for impertinence. The managing editor sat in his private room, surrounded by "ancient masters" accumulated through the wealth of his master in Europe, posing himself before the mirror, inlaid in his desk, for the picture of "Despair." Before him was a telegram, addressed to the owner of a large Philadelphia paper, which read as follows—

"Am tired of New York work. Can I resume my position with you?"

He fingered his pencil gingerly and contemplated the addition of a few words. Meanwhile, he pondered over the comparative advantages of three hundred dollars per week in New York, with no peace, and one hundred and twenty dollars per week, in Philadelphia, with peace. And still he hesitated to sign his name to this telegram that was to forestall his threatened dismissal.

In the big, long room near-by, where special and regular outside men wrote or lounged at desks in the fulfilment or hope of assignments, an animated conversation was taking place. The news editor had swung around from his roll-top desk and now had his hand gripped on the arm of a tall and absurdly youthful-looking individual. The news editor was a person addicted to strong language, worse rheumatism, and overwhelming reticence. By virtue of these three qualities he concealed a multitude of incapacities from his employer and inflicted continuous torture upon his subordinates. He was a power on the paper, and the managing editor was horribly afraid of him, because he was the personal appointee of the owner. At this moment, however, the two men were drawn together in the common cause of self-preservation, for the gloom that hung over the office was a shadow which threatened the heads of all the *Howler's* news departments.

"You will try, anyway, won't you? For Heaven's sake, try!"

A boy who passed within earshot ran smack into the sharp corner of an abutting desk in his astonishment at the unwonted note of appeal in the tone of the news editor, who was still holding the young man's sleeve. The news editor always treated the young man in question with less profanity than he allocated to the majority of the staff, because, despite his juvenile appearance, he was the Star Man. The term implies little to the public, but in a newspaper office it means a world of work. Before a man can be regarded as the best reporter on the paper and win the name of Star Man, he

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has to pass through mills that grind exceeding small and rough.

The Star Man smiled, lit a fresh cigarette, and gave his word that he would do his best. When you are a Star Man of a paper like the *Howler* at twenty-eight years old, and the two great competitors of the *Howler* are offering you more than you are getting, you can afford to smile at your news editor's earnestness, despite his reputation for rheumatic brusqueness. Moreover, to tell the truth, the Star Man was not over-interested in the gloomy situation in which the *Howler* found itself; for even if everything came to the worst and the omniscient proprietor cut off all the big heads by cable, he could accept an exceptionally pleasing offer which he had received that day from the *Howler's* rival, a few doors down the Row. Yet, in the request that had just been made to him, the Star Man felt more interest than he had allowed himself to evince to the news editor. Firstly, it flattered his vanity; secondly, it gave him great temporary power; and thirdly, it launched him into a struggle for fair principles against odds that were both large and interesting.

What had happened to the *Howler* and what caused the Star Man these reflections will be remembered only by a few of those antiquaries who have carefully studied the history of the nineteenth century. The city of New York, by some strange freak of popular will, had delivered itself, body and soul, into the power of one man, known as the Tyrant. Unfortunately for the *Howler*, the Tyrant had against it and its absent proprietor an implacable, undying hatred, which, after all, was not surprising, because the *Howler* had persistently denounced the Tyrant and all his works. A few days before this New Year's Eve, when the Tyrant was on the verge of reaping the fruits of the popular verdict, he announced boldly that the *Howler* was to be given no scrap, no hint, no crumb of news from any of his followers. At that time the Tyrant had removed his Court to a winter resort not a hundred miles from New York, where he was surrounded by many henchmen and the leaders of the party which he kindly favoured with his nominal adherence. There the Tyrant was an object of national interest and of vital importance to the citizens of New York.

All the Tyrant's declamations could not prevent the *Howler* from printing detailed and illustrated accounts of his movements. This was done gleefully; but when the Tyrant declared that the names of the puppets that he would nominate for municipal office in the city of New York should be published in every newspaper before they appeared in the *Howler*, the managing editor of that "sheet" declared that the thing was going beyond a joke, and reinforced his staff at the country Court of the Tyrant by sending his very best political man, with two assistants. Thus the *Howler* had five experienced men at the Tyrant's Court, each instructed to obtain at all costs the Tyrant's list of municipal appointments. Even though they were puppets, it was essential that the *Howler* should tell its huge circulation who were to be their nominal rulers.

Yet only that morning the chief political reporter had wired: "I refuse to accept responsibility for getting Tyrant's list of appointments. He has formed combine amongst other newspapers against us, making them agree not to give us anything, under penalty of being boycotted from all city offices during his term. They cannot help themselves. Tyrant completely controls situation. Has everyone scared to death. See no way preventing him leaving us out in the cold on the city appointments."

The proprietor of the *Howler*, who had been religiously kept informed by cable of the prior events, and who hated the Tyrant even as the Tyrant hated him, was sorrowfully made cognisant of the gist of the foregoing telegram. Laconically he had just replied: "If you don't get that list, I get new staff."

Hence the gloom, the managing editor's meditated telegram to Philadelphia, the news editor's entreaties, and the copy-boy's temporary reformation. When the Star Man was sent to the Court of the Tyrant, it was a measure of last resort. He was "not much on politics," except in writing the descriptive "leads" to a National Convention, and his work had been rather in great strikes, foreign wars, murders, and other interesting matter, than in the ramifications of local politics. Where the chief political man had failed, there was small hope that the Star Man of general work, despite his undoubted ability, could pull the fat out of the fire. And the appointments were to be made that same day—New Year's Eve.

As the Star Man lolled lazily in the smoking-car on his way to the Tyrant's country Court there was nothing, either in face or manner, to indicate the mission on which he was bent; yet he had been empowered to employ unlimited money to

"'Little girl, you have taught me a lesson. Good night.'"

defeat the Tyrant, to stop at no means in this object, and at all costs to convey a message of open defiance to the man then more powerful in New York than ever a Czar was in Russia. The Star Man smiled grimly as he thought of it and enumerated his munitions of war. In his pocket were bills to the amount of three thousand dollars and an unlimited draft on a local bank. At the other end were five men, already instructed by telegraph to take his orders. However, as they had that day confessed defeat, the Star Man dismissed them from consideration, patted his pocket-book of notes with some satisfaction, and resigned himself to rely upon them and his own good luck.

A few hours later, the Tyrant, wearing that compromise between respectability and vulgarity—a dinner-coat and things to match—walked imperiously and silently through the halls of the winter hotel. In the great, warm *foyer* sat benevolent State and city leaders of the party which, for the moment, this man dominated. Now and again the Tyrant beckoned. Nero could not have wiggled his fat fingers with more imperious gesture or to more frantic response. At the magic sign half-a-dozen elderly men rose, unapologetic, from the side of the women with whom they

were talking. The lust of place was in their faces. Beneath the stern features of the Tyrant one could see the drunkenness that only comes with unmitigated power. One by one he took them, and duologues, jealously scanned by those waiting, ended with a wave or a gesture as imperious as the motion which gave rise to the whispered promenade.

Faultlessly dressed, thoroughly enjoying

"'Oh! a little side work.'"

the after-effects of an excellent dinner, the "Geisha" music from the hotel band floating pleasantly around him, the Star Man watched all these things. To tell the truth, he had been superbly lazy since he arrived. The Micawber-like humour which had enveloped him all that last day of the old year was taking him back to Harvard, where he was known more for his culture, his charm, and his athletic prowess than for his "nose for news." To be sure, he had consulted with the five *Howler* men already at the hotel; but from them he had learned nothing new, nor gained one idea as to how an apparently impossible situation was to be met. At the present moment he was thinking how utterly out of place the Tyrant, who continually kept passing and repassing him, would have appeared at the particular Commencement when he, the Star Man, recited the Greek ode which won so much favour, or at the hop that he danced at with really one of the prettiest girls that ever . . .

The hotel clock struck nine. That material instinct which in the short space of five years had transformed a cub reporter, fresh from Harvard, into a Star Man, reasserted itself. He went to the telephone and called up the *Howler*. By a coincidence which he neither

suspected nor desired, one of the Tyrant's chief political lieutenants entered the next telephone-booth and called up one of the few political demigods of New York who had been unable to be present at the Court. And as the partitions were thin, the Star Man could not help hearing this—

"Hello! Is that you? Well, I just want to tell you that Mike is slated for street-cleaning. I'll let you know the whole slate later. Say! the old man won't let us wire anything except fake messages, for fear the *Howler* gets it. Yes, he's crazy about that 'rag.' You'll see the right list in all the papers except the *Howler*. Good-bye. Call you up later and give you the list!"

The Star Man heard nothing of interest over his own telephone. The hotel telegraph-office was an open one facing the hall. Somewhat ostentatiously the Star Man took a chair and sat close by the telegraph-counter. Four operators were busy ticking out press and private messages. He could hear every movement of the instruments. Scarcely five minutes had elapsed before one of the many newspaper men who swarmed around the hotel came up and, with a comprehensive glance at the Star Man's proximity to the telegraph, sneered—

"So you came down for this, did you? Think you'll get out of the hole by listening to our despatches, eh?"

Whereat, unblushingly, the Star Man answered—

"Well, can't blame me, can you? I'm not kicking at your boycott of the *Howler*. Don't see why you should kick at me."

To his shame, be it said, the Star Man could neither read nor send a single word of a telegraphic message.

A few minutes later, after several leading newspaper men had held a hurried consultation with the Tyrant, there was a sudden descent upon the telegraph-office. Each man took his copy and disappeared with it out into the night. There was a telegraph-office in another hotel nearly a mile away. This the Star Man knew, and it suited his book that they should refile their messages there. As a matter of fact, each correspondent had sent the much desired list of appointments by special messenger on the train that arrived in New York about midnight, but there were references in these telegraphed messages and other items of news which they feared might be useful to the *Howler*, and which, if printed in that paper, would be taken by the Tyrant as a breach of their faith with him.

When the coast was pretty well cleared by this exodus of correspondents, the Star Man strolled out under the pines. He smoked as nonchalantly as any melodramatic villain until he came to a secluded part not far from the road to the village. Careful inspection revealed no onlookers. He buttoned up his coat, walked swiftly towards the road, clambered through a thick hedge, and set out on a gentle run for the lights that glimmered in the little valley half a mile ahead.

"It's a dirty trick," he said to himself, as he jogged along the dark country road. "Dirty trick in the beginning, overhearing a telephone conversation. Dirtier trick what I'm going to do. Wonder what the class of 189– would think of it? Funny how Jesuitical one becomes when morality and newspaper business clash——"

Then he reached the little office which served as the village telephone-exchange and public call-station. He had to knock several times. Finally, the door was opened a few inches.

"What do you want?" said a feminine voice, in rather petulant tones.

"Want to talk to New York, please," said the Star Man. "Sorry to trouble you!" This in his most apologetic manner.

The door was opened wide, and the Star Man stepped into the stream of light which showed him the tiny office. Then the door shut, and he saw a slender girl, certainly not more than eighteen, with a whole wealth of brown hair carelessly coiled around her head, as if half ready for bed, and a very evident smile playing around her lips. She was undoubtedly pretty, but—and the Star Man fingered his pocket-book—very young for such business as he had on hand that night. Her smile broke into a laugh which she evidently tried, but utterly failed, to suppress, and which ended in a blush, vivid and embarrassing.

"What are you laughing at?" asked the Star Man.

The girl paused.

"Well," she said, "to tell the truth, you look so funny!" and she laughed again. For the first time the Star Man remembered the odd effect that a buttoned-up dress-coat and bare head is likely to produce. He laughed too. The gaiety of this little night-owl, with her twinkling eyes, brimful of humour, was infectious. And the merriment gave him an opening.

"You're rather young to be left alone in charge of this place at night, aren't you?" he queried.

"Oh! not so young," replied the girl, with mocking glance at his own beardless face. Then, with directness that was disconcerting, she asked—

"Why didn't you talk to New York from the hotel?"

"How did you know that I was at the hotel?" retorted the Star man, taken aback.

"Because I recognised your voice——"

"Do you mean to say you recognise one from all the voices you hear at the exchange?"

A call sounded. "No," said the girl, switching over a few pegs. She paused, talking at the keyboard; and as the light shone down on her face, the Star Man, who was neither easily influenced nor without discriminating experience, mentally remarked: "By Jove! she certainly is pretty." The connection was made, and the girl, turning around, said—

"No, I don't remember *all* the voices, but I'd know yours."

"Why?" asked the Star Man, rather pleased, yet a trifle suspicious.

The girl hesitated and blushed. "Oh, don't bother me," she finally blurted out. "I don't know; I rather—well—I rather liked your voice. Now, will you be good?" and she went off into a fit of laughing, which ended as suddenly as it began, with the abrupt exclamation—

"What number do you want?"

The Star Man asked for the *Howler*. Not that he really wanted that respected paper, but it would serve to kill time. While they waited to get through, the Star Man discovered that the girl's name was Vera, that her mother was paralysed and at that moment lay on her bed upstairs. Vera modestly admitted that she "kept the roost going."

"Pretty busy it keeps me, too," she volunteered, "with all these politicians down here. They're telephoning New York all the time."

For the sake of something to say, the Star Man asked her if she was interested in overhearing the various conversations.

"No," was the answer; then, with a merry twinkle: "but I think *you* would be, if you could hear them."

"How d'you mean?"

"Well, perhaps I shouldn't tell you—(Hello! yes, this is the Court; all right, hold the wire!)—in fact, I've no right at all, but you must know that they're all trying to 'do' the *Howler?*"

"So I believe," said the Star Man drily. He was saying to himself: "How shall I ever summon up enough courage to offer a bribe to such a perfectly unsophisticated, frank young person? And yet, if I don't bribe her, what earthly chance have I got to get that list of appointments?"

"It's too bad," said the girl. "I hate to see anybody done like that. Why, it's a regular boycott. I know," she added archly, with an unspoken, blushing confession of eavesdropping, "how badly you want that list of appointments."

For a few seconds there had been on the tip of the Star Man's tongue those preliminary sentences which prelude the offer of a bribe. In fact, he was even then handling some loose bills, meditating what would be the best sum to offer. Just as those thoughts were in his mind, he encountered the half-sympathising, half-shy glance of such an honest, lovable pair of young eyes, that he crumpled the bills and said quite unconsciously but aloud—

"Hang it, I won't!"

As the girl looked at him in blank astonishment, his own face, reputed the handsomest at Harvard in his day, crimsoned deeper than most of his boon companions would ever have admitted to be possible. Just as he was about to explain, he got through to the *Howler*. The managing editor was at the other end of the wire.

"It's no good," said the Star Man, speaking fast and loudly. "We can't do it. We might as well make up our minds to be beaten. Yes, I know—rotten work, but"—with a gulp—"if you were down here yourself, you'd see how impossible it was—— Eh? Oh, well, it's no good abusing me——" Then, very brusquely: "Good night!"

The Star Man paid for the telephone-call, with strict scrupulousness as to the exact amount.

"You give it up, then?" asked the girl. The Star Man laughed.

"Why," he said, "I think you take as much interest in it as I do. How full of confidences your little head must be if you take such concern in all the conversations that come under your control! Yes, I guess it's all up—to me," with rather a bitter smile. "I'd probably better have stayed in New York——"

"I'm glad you didn't." Then, realising the boldness of what she had said, the girl took refuge in much working of switches, for which there was no apparent reason.

The Star Man turned to go. He put out his hand, took her small fingers in his own, grasped them firmly, and said—

"'Yes, you think you've got the appointments, don't you?'"

"Little girl, you have taught me a lesson, and a good lesson at that. Good night."

He trudged down the road back to the hotel. The wind was bitterly cold and did not soften his reflection of failure. He knew full well that in that telephone-office he had deliberately left behind him the sole hope of success. A list of city appointments seemed a small thing, yet it was essential that the *Howler*, with its enormous local circulation, should not be beaten on it, and more essential still that the Tyrant should not be allowed to win what he had chosen to make a first and crucial test of power and hatred. All the Star Man's enthusiasm, all his keen instinct for overcoming obstacles that stood between him and legitimate news, welled up in him. "Curse it!" he said, "a kiss and a five-dollar note, and that girl—— No! the five-dollar business would kill it. But the kiss—and I'd like it, too, apart from the business end."

He turned back and started once more for the telephone-office. He had scarcely gone ten yards before he was denouncing himself as an arrant, unprincipled cad. A few minutes later, after a run which relieved his mind, he was in his hotel. The *Howler's* head political man pounced on him.

"Where on earth have you been?" he demanded. Then he drew him aside and in confidential yet exultant tones revealed to him that he had got the list of appointments.

"How did you get it?" asked the Star Man rather languidly.

"Oh! a little side work," was the rather mysterious reply. The old political man carefully pulled out the copy of a despatch he had just sent to the *Howler*, containing the full "slate."

"Well, I congratulate you," said the Star Man. "Hold on a minute, and I'll come and have a drink with you."

He started to perform his last task. It was after midnight, and the Tyrant had almost finished his incessant interviews. The Star Man stopped the Tyrant in the middle of the hall and put into his hands a short letter which authorised the bearer to speak and act for the *Howler* from an editorial, news, business, political, and every other conceivable standpoint that a great newspaper may possess.

"I merely wish to tell you," said the Star Man, in tones that were bitterly incisive and loud enough for those near by to hear, "that if you think you can prevent us getting news, you are mistaken. In any such attempt you will fail miserably, and will only succeed in making yourself ridiculous, and the editorial attacks upon you more bitter."

For a second the Tyrant sized up the tall frame of the Star Man, from his fair head to his patent-leather shoes, as if measuring his strength with him and meditating where to strike. Two or three husky politicians started forward. Only by an effort the Tyrant restrained his natural outlet of physical force. With a loud oath he shouted—

"The *Howler* has pounded me for six years, and now I'll pound it! Not a thing will it ever get in New York!"

The drowsing politicians and their spouses awakened in alarm. Waiters gathered around.

"It is just as well to know," murmured the Star Man, adding: "I am much obliged for your delightfully frank statement. It shall appear to-morrow in the *Howler*—side by side with your appointments."

The Tyrant had turned to go. He could not trust his anger, but this last sally was too much. With a leer he snapped—

"Yes, you think you've got the appointments, don't you? I tell you, once for all, the *Howler* will be a byword before I'm done with it."

He turned on his heel and went to the elevator.

Escaping the glances of the crowd which marvelled at a man so reckless as publicly and deliberately to incur the anger of the Tyrant, the Star Man hurried to the political reporter's room. The Tyrant's last taunt had made him suspicious.

"Are you sure of your facts?" he asked.

Somewhat scornfully, for he had no great idea of the Star Man's ability, the *Howler's* political reporter explained that he had obtained his list by paying for the copy of another man's despatch, filed at the hotel telegraph-office. The whole truth flashed before the Star Man in a second. The *Howler* had been made the victim of a hoax, the plan for which he had overheard at the telephone early in the evening. Without waiting to explain or expostulate with the political reporter, the Star Man went quickly to the telephone. It was after one o'clock, and there were only a few minutes to spare in which to save the *Howler* from becoming the victim of the Tyrant's spite. There was now no chance to get the real list, but no news at all was better than falling into the trap set by the *Howler's* arch enemy. In his anxiety to get his office, the Star Man entirely forgot his experience at the village telephone-exchange.

"585 Cortlandt!" he almost shouted when he heard Exchange on the wire. "Hello! is that you again?" came a somewhat saucy voice. A shade of annoyance crossed the man's face. This was no time for fooling. "Yes," he said, "that's me; but for Heaven's sake hurry up!" "Sorry," came the reply, "but I'm rather busy. Hold the wire a second."

With three frantic "Hellos!" which received no response, the Star Man swallowed an oath that would have done credit to the Tyrant. He writhed on the little telephone-stool and simultaneously glanced at the clock. The hands were at half-past one. In a few minutes it would be too late. He heard the switches working in the exchange, and cursed his foolishness for making too free with a telephone-girl. Once more he was about to invoke fiercely her immediate attention, when he heard through the receiver he now clutched so frantically: "Here you are. Got a pencil? Take it down and read it to the 'boys.' This is the full 'slate.' It was only decided a few minutes ago."

The voice was the voice of the Tyrant's lieutenant, whom the Star Man had overheard earlier in the evening. The Star Man leaned over, but no one else besides himself was using the hotel telephones. Instinctively he followed instructions, took a pencil, and wrote according to dictation. Where the voice of the lieutenant came from, the Star Man knew not, but the authenticity and priceless value of the information were unmistakable. Afterwards the Star Man found that the voice, so mysteriously heard, came from another hotel, where its owner had gone for safety and secrecy.

In less than five minutes, the Star Man, almost breathless with surprise and excitement, had before him every appointment for the forthcoming administration of the city of New York. The conversation ended. The list in front of him was different in every detail from the false one which the *Howler* must at the moment be printing. In a frenzy of energy the Star Man rung the telephone-bell.

"585 Cort——," he shouted. Before he could finish, a familiar voice, but full of suppressed excitement, told him they were already on the line waiting for him.

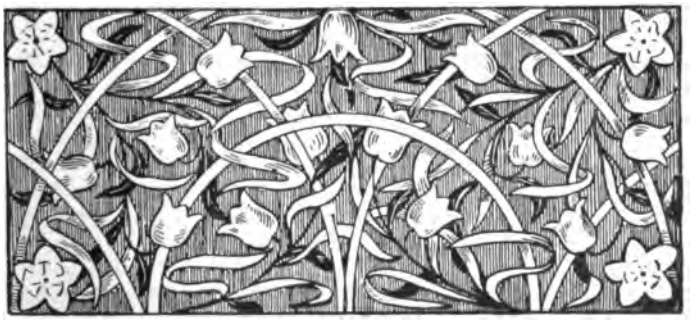
In shorter time than it takes to tell, the Star Man saved the *Howler* from ignominious public and serious personal defeat. To be sure, the paper had to be stopped and the first page "made over," but the *Howler* that New Year's morning came out with the only correct list of appointments; for since the Tyrant's chosen correspondents had sent in their lists several minor changes had been decided upon which the Tyrant had not remembered or had not thought sufficiently important to mention.

And when the noise and confusion and jubilation which the Star Man's message caused in the office of the *Howler* were cut off from his ears, he heard a laughing voice saying: "Too bad you had to wait so long for the *Howler!* Hope you won't report me for delay!"

A sudden buzzing of wires, broken at intervals by catches of happy laughter, quite drowned all the Star Man tried to say to the village telephone-exchange which had saved him from defeat.

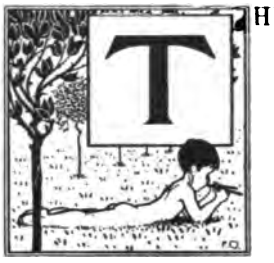
* * * * *

The managing editor sent a magnificent wedding gift, and realising that, after all, New York was infinitely preferable to Philadelphia, signed himself "Ever yours gratefully." The proprietor of the *Howler*, absent, but unusually omniscient, presented, by cable, a nicely furnished house, in which, by special stipulation of the Star Man's bride, there was no telephone.



CONCERNING POPULARITY.

By A BOY WHO SCORNS IT.



THERE was a chap at our school once who understood the art of making himself popular. He was a swell at mathematics, and very ugly. We called him Plain Trigonometry—Trig, for short. I don't mean to imply that either the mathematics or the ugliness had anything to do with his popularity; but you'll find that, nine times out of ten, if a chap has a nickname, it means that the other fellows like him. There was no harm about Trig—not an ounce; but I'm blest if I know how he got himself to be liked better than other people, for, outside of mathematics, there was nothing extra special about his mind, and his manners were very ordinary. (The above paragraph I consider to be an excellent imitation of the style of a deservedly admired author, but I'm afraid I can't keep it up any longer.) His looks I have already spoken of—I refer now to Trig, and not to the aforementioned author—and there is no use in rubbing it in that he was more like a white nigger than anything else I can think of. Anyhow, he was popular. Everyone wanted him for everything. He was asked to all the day-boys' birthday parties. He was always the first chosen after tossing for sides at cricket. When hampers came, he was given enough grub to stock a tuck-shop. The masters were as soft as cotton-wool on him: I don't believe he would have been caned if he had buzzed an inkpot at the Head's head.

Well, I was only a new boy, very young and green, when he was at what I might call the boiling point of his popularity; and I was ass enough to envy him. I kept thinking to myself all the time how nice it would be to have the other fellows looking up and smiling like seraphim, and saying: "Hullo! *you*, old chap?" in tones of dulcet honey, whenever I came into the prep.-room or the play-room; and I set about trying to make myself as like Trig as possible, being idiot enough to think that nothing else was necessary to ensure popularity.

In the first place, I devoted my whole mind to mathematics, and neglected other branches of study at which I am pretty good by nature. (I don't mean, as some foolish people might think, that I am good at neglecting any studies.) The consequence of this was that I was given no credit at all for improving in Trig's pet subject, while I got into no end of hot water for not knowing my other lessons.

Then I tried to make myself like Trig in appearance. I pouted my lips whenever I remembered it. I worked hard at flattening my nose by keeping my thumbs pressed against the tip of it all though prep. I squeezed up my eyes until they ached; and I did all I knew to make my hair stand straight on end like the bristles of a brush. I bribed some of the small kids to call me Quilp and Quasimodo; and I made such faces in class that every one of the masters smacked my head in turn and said they were doing it out of kindness to prevent me from becoming imbecile.

I set to work then to find out if there was any other peculiarity about Trig that I could copy, but that stumped me. He was always in a good humour, but I didn't think much of that, for I am fairly good-humoured myself, when people don't go out of their way to make me sit up. His taste in ties was remarkable: he had a fancy for pea-green. I tried pea-green, too, but my relations interfered. It seemed hopeless. Then I went the complete round of the school, asking each boy why he liked Trig; but not a bit of satisfaction could I get from any of them. Most of them said they didn't know, and a few of them smacked my head for asking impertinent questions. This treatment must have knocked me silly, for, in a fit of absent-mindedness, I asked Trig himself.

"I'm sorry for your parents," said Trig. "Upon my word, I am. I heard a rumour that you were being overtaken by this affliction, but I hoped it might not be true. Now I see that there can be no more doubt about it."

"What affliction?" said I; and my face

"When hampers came, he was given enough grub to stock a tuck-shop."

was as hot as if I'd been sitting in front of a fire.

He touched his forehead and looked as if he meant something insulting by it. I fancy I felt more like punching Trig than anyone had ever felt before.

"Don't take it hard," said he. "You may recover. I've heard of worse cases being cured."

"Cases of *what?*" said I; and it would be untrue to state that I did not speak in italics.

But he only tapped his ugly nut again and turned away, pretending to look sad.

This started me on my very last attempt to imitate him. For the rest of that day I went about thumping my forehead like—well, like what Trig meant to imply that I was. (It was later on that I discovered his meaning.)

The result was that Mr. Carden reported to the Head his absurd idea that I'd had a touch of the sun in the playing-field, and I was sent home for a week to rest my brain.

When I came back, my views were entirely changed. So far from yearning to discover the secret of Trig's influence over the vulgar herd, I had now a rooted contempt for popularity, and I proceeded to make this plain to all whom it might concern. I tried, by strict attention to my appearance, to make myself look as well as Nature permitted. I wore nothing but white silk ties. (I can see, on looking over this article, that the above statement has something misleading about it, and might be understood to indicate a very pronounced eccentricity on my part; but a moment's consideration should be enough to show an intelligent reader that I meant to say white silk ties were the only ties I wore). I neglected mathematics to the extent of getting caned for inexcusable carelessness, and I progressed with my other studies as well as I had done before being seized by a foolish but temporary ambition.

I had come to the conclusion that popularity was worthless; and the way I reached the conclusion was by this argument: Anything must be worthless that has no reason for its existence. If there had been a reason for Trig's popularity, I should certainly have found some fellow good-natured enough to give it to me. I didn't; so there wasn't. Therefore it was worthless. (I have been given to understand by a home critic, whose opinion I did not ask—in direct terms, my father—that my logic is not without a flaw; but, personally, I am satisfied with it.) In short, I scorn popularity.

I said so to Dowson, when there was no one else to talk to. (He is a rotter, as I have already explained, and when there *is* anyone else to talk to, I take no notice of him.)

He answered by beginning, in his most objectionably facetious style, to recite a fable from one of the school translation books.

"There was once a fox," said Dowson, "who saw a bunch of fine grapes hanging——"

"But that is another story," said I; and he shut up, as he is liable to do when he doesn't know what a chap means.

I regard this interruption as one of the neatest strokes I have ever made. That is why I record it.

WITH CAP AND BELLS.

WITH cap and bells, day after day
The jester's jocund part I play;
Yes, "Motley is the only wear,"
The only fabric that will bear
Time's touch or turn Fate's frown away.

The wisest in the world are they—
Earth's laughter-loving ones—who stray
Along through life from year to year
With cap and bells.

A laugh—our sorrow can allay;
A sigh—our merriment can slay;
Give me the jest that's not a jeer,
Give me the smile that's not a sneer,
And you may crown me till I'm grey,
With cap and bells.

LOUIS A. ROBERTSON.

THE BALANCING BURGLAR.

By ALBERT E. KING.*

THE winter of 189— was the busiest one on record in our line, and the house in which I held the important position of accountant did an immense trade. I had the reputation, if my friends are to be believed, of being an accurate bookkeeper. This does not alter the fact, however, that at ten o'clock one cold, wintry night, I was still straining my eyesight, worrying my brain, and imperilling my eternal salvation in a vain endeavour to find two pence. For a week, during and after office hours, I had hunted for this difference—a petty thing, but essential to my balance. I had made every imaginable re-check, and taken out a dozen different balance-sheets, all with the same result. Two pence haunted me day and night; walking, eating, sleeping, I could not shake it off. Naturally even-tempered, I was fast becoming irritable, and could barely muster up a smile at my wife's offer to give me two pennies "to straighten the old thing out."

I had been alone in the office, which was in the back part of the warehouse, from about nine o'clock. At that time one of the younger office hands, who had come back after tea, took his departure for the night. Not his final departure, however, for he had forgotten his tobacco, and returned for it shortly afterwards. I unlocked the door to let him in, relieved my mind with some comments about his stupidity as he looked for the tobacco, and locked the door again after he went out. I had come back to the office on this particular night determined to find those two pence or break something internally. It was half-past ten; I had found nothing, and my stock of patience was well-nigh exhausted—in fact, I had reached that stage when the wise man goes home and to bed. I got thinking in a desultory sort of manner about one thing or another, my environment being suited to undisturbed meditation; not a sound came from the deserted street without, not even the ticking of a clock within. Gradually my mind reverted to the books lying open before me. "Hang it!" I ejaculated, as I straightened up my stool, "where in thunder can those blooming two pennies be?"

"You won't catch any fish if you swear, old man," came in a deep bass voice out of the silence I had broken, as a heavy hand grasped my shoulder.

* * * * *

I didn't quite flop—the hand from behind keeping me firm on my seat—but I never again want to experience a shock like the one I felt at that moment. A cold wave ran up and down my spinal column, and great beads of perspiration stood out on my forehead. Turning my head mechanically, the barrel of a revolver, held in the hand of a man over whose face a cynical, half-amused smile was playing, met my startled vision. In an instant the actions of my whole life passed before my mind with vivid, kaleidoscopic rapidity, every transgression standing out in appalling prominence. A pair of dark eyes looked down at me as their owner remarked—

"Well, have you said your prayers?"

"I'm not through yet," I managed to murmur. "Would you mind moving that revolver a little farther away? It disturbs me."

"Not so bad," he remarked, as one eye wandered in a peculiar, independent sort of manner around the office, while the other remained focused on me. "Perhaps if you took that big chair over there, you would feel more at home."

The mention of home suggested my wife, and I pictured her in widow's weeds. Then I mentally decided to give the stranger the whole establishment rather than Mrs. King should assume a garb so unbecoming and mournful. I took the seat as directed, while he got up on the stool, dangling the revolver with apparent carelessness between his knees, and all the time watching me as if to note the effect of his uninvited presence on my nerves.

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"I dropped in quite accidentally," he said at last. "Just came in after the young fellow. I would have sent in my card, but then you wouldn't have known me. Don't generally as a rule send in a card ahead, though I sometimes leave one. Owe you an apology, I suppose?"

While he was speaking, I had an opportunity of looking him over. He was a big man, fully six feet in height, and of good proportions. A well-trimmed, black beard gave him an air of mature respectability which seemed to fit him, but a cynical expression about the mouth detracted somewhat from the favourable impression which his facial picture would otherwise convey. He wore a Persian lamb cap and an overcoat with collar and cuffs of the same fur.

"Don't trouble about an apology," I answered. "The question is, what do you want?"

"Well, since you ask, I want a whole lot of things I don't expect to get. The class of goods you carry here are a little too heavy to be conveniently moved, but, if you don't mind, I'll explore that——" And he pointed to the safe which stood, with door wide open, in a corner of the office.

I told him that it was not worth his time; that the safe contained nothing but books and papers, a few postage-stamps, and, perhaps, a few shillings in change, adding that he did not look like a person who would stoop to such small things.

"I generally play for bigger stakes," he admitted with an air of importance, "but I am not too proud to accept small contributions on an off-night like this. You just pull out the drawers and I'll superintend the job."

To remonstrate would have been useless; to refuse, imprudent. I have a reputation for discretion which I should not like to lose, especially under such circumstances, so I immediately produced the contents of the safe, from which my visitor selected eight shillings and some coppers in cash and five shillings or so in postage-stamps, telling me that "I could keep the balance for my trouble." The balance, by the way, was not negotiable.

"The weight of this swag won't tire me," he sighed. "Have you any money on your clothes?"

I thanked my lucky stars that I had very little money and no jewellery, unless a cheap watch which had been loaned me while my own was being repaired came under the latter heading. At the same time, I had a decided dislike to hand over what little I possessed. It goes against human nature to be held up. I had not half liked the idea of presenting him with the contents of my employer's safe, but I had a deep-rooted objection to emptying my own pockets for his benefit, and I told him so.

"Now, don't be squeamish, old man, and, above all, don't be foolish," was his cool advice. "You will find it far nicer to go through your own clothes than to have me do it." And he looked at me in a manner that is most persuasive when backed by a big man with a six-shooter.

I hesitated a while—a very little while—and then turned my pockets inside out, which operation made him richer by three shillings and fivepence.

"Your watch," he suggested. I gave it to him. He looked at it, turned it over a few times, and handed it back with the laconic remark: "Thanks."

"Sit down," he said, as he mounted the stool once more. "Do you know," he continued after a short pause, during which he took another view of the surroundings, and I noticed for the first time that half of the little finger of his left hand was missing—"I would be inclined to give you back your three and fivepence if the money market wasn't so deuced tight. The stringency is something fearful, and I am actually hard up for cash these times—money all tied up, you know, by inconsiderate capitalists in such a manner that I really can't get at it. Don't believe I could realise £3,000 in a week. If things weren't so deucedly rotten, I would give you back your stuff, 'pon my word I would."

"Never mind the three and fivepence or your word, either," I replied, for I was in bad humour and could not appreciate the generous feelings he found it necessary to smother. "Seeing there is nothing else around here you want that you can carry, suppose you go?"

"Don't be inhospitable, old fellow," he rejoined in an injured tone. "I kind of like your company; you're not a bad sort of a chap, and I really hate to part with you." He looked at me in a friendly way, and I began to think that the appearance of the watch had touched his heart. He was certainly relenting, whatever the cause.

"You remind me of an old pal of mine," he continued, and I felt duly flattered—"as good a fellow as ever wore shoe-leather—dead now—and this place brings back the old office. Good old times until I got too gay. Trotted too fast. Don't get too gay, don't trot too fast; it doesn't pay in the long

"'You won't catch any fish if you swear.'"

run. Bah! what is the use in grunting? No good weeping over what can't be helped."

He started towards the door. Stopping midway, he turned as if suddenly recollecting something. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he said; "I'll find that twopence, or give you back the dough—stamps and all!"

* * * * *

Two pence had worried me for a week, but I can solemnly swear not for the last quarter of an hour. I looked at him in amazement, at a loss to decide whether he were serious or only jesting. He read my thoughts.

"No, I'm not guying; I think I remember a thing or two about balances. Come on," he ordered, turning towards the books, "it is getting late; and if we don't find that

difference in half an hour, I'm a Jonah! What is it, short or over?"

"Over," I replied. I was now at his side, eager to see the outcome of this new phase of his character.

"Your figures?" he inquired, pointing at the balance-sheet. I nodded assent. "Bad," he remarked. "Threes and fives too much alike, sevens and nines worse. That's where your difference is, surely."

"Perhaps," I admitted.

"Surely," he reiterated. "Now we'll compare each amount on your sheet ending with a five or a nine with your ledger. Look out for this one!"

We started the comparison, he calling off the amounts and I comparing with ledger, as he looked over my shoulder. We had worked about ten minutes without any results, when he called out a total.

"Right," I answered.

"Try again," he suggested; "that last figure looks mightily like a nine, but it may be one of your sevens."

I checked the ledger addition three times—seven was right. There, right under my nose, where it had been all the week, the error of two pence stood out so plainly that I wondered how I had passed it over so often; and here was my burglar, with a matter-of-fact smile, putting on the overcoat which he had removed when we started the comparison.

I looked at him and laughed outright at the ridiculousness of the situation. "You're feeling better now," he said, as he broke into a mild sort of laugh himself. "Well, so am I. You see, I have earned my fee, which is somewhat of a new sensation. Suppose I put up a brass plate as accountant, etc., do you think I could make it go?"

"I really don't know," I replied. "You have a very peculiar way of introducing yourself, and a rather unpleasant method of collecting your fees in advance."

"I should merely have to change the *modus operandi*," he replied; "the result would be the same if——"

That is as far as he got. A tremendous knocking at the door, accompanied by the sound of voices, cut him short. His features, which had relaxed into an expression of positive pleasure, became fiercely set.

"See who it is, but let no one in," he commanded.

I opened the office door, and soon distinguished the party demanding admittance as my brother Jack and three of his fellow-clubmen. A hearty lot of healthy athletes—a bad combination for a burglar or anyone else to tackle.

"My brother and three friends," I said, returning to my companion.

"All right," he answered. "I won't harm them. Just you call out that it is all right, and I'll open the door for them. The key is in the lock, isn't it?"

For a moment I did not know what to do. I was certainly possessed of a number of conflicting emotions, and in a state of utter indecision. Again he helped me—and himself—out. "Here," he said, handing me the revolver. "Holler 'All right!' or they'll wake the village."

I did exactly as I was told to do. "All right! Stop that rumpus, and we'll open the door!" I shouted.

"Good night," said my visitor. "You stay here."

With this he walked towards the door, turned the bolt, and admitted the quartette.

"Your brother's inside, just closing up," I heard him remark in an agreeable way. They entered with glances of polite curiosity at the stranger, who let them pass, and then made his exit without any undignified haste.

"Who is his job-lots?" asked the irreverent Jack. "New hand?"

Spying the revolver, which was lying on the desk, he continued, greatly to my relief: "Well, you were pretty well guarded to-night. A bodyguard and a revolver—only an ornament, however; not loaded. Out of stock, I suppose?" He handed me the deadly weapon. I took a good long look at it. It certainly was not loaded, and, no doubt, was out of stock.

"Wake up!" said Tom Taylor, in that heavy voice of his. "A person would think you had never seen that thing before. Who was the chap that let us in?"

"He? Don't you know him? His name is Smith. He's a recent acquaintance of mine, who is quite an artist at finding balances. He gave me a hand to-night, and we found my two pence."

"Good," said Jack; "you can treat on the head of it."

I borrowed half-a-sovereign from Jack and treated on the way home, and the boys were somewhat amazed at the proportions of my dose.

It was many moons after before I ventured to relate my experience of the night, as somehow I did not consider that I had played a very heroic part in the evening's drama.

As to the balancing burglar, I have never heard of him since.

THE TWO AMBASSADORS.

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.*

STOURTON, for the first time since he had left Downing Street, released his hold of the despatch-box. Both doors of the railway carriage in which he was seated were locked, on both windows was pasted a modest oblong label announcing that the compartment was reserved. There was no lavatory, and he had already looked carefully under the seats. Outside on the platform a liberally tipped servant of the company stood before the carriage door to prevent any attempt at intrusion. Stourton, with a little sigh of relief, set down the box on the middle seat opposite to him, lit a cigar, and opened the evening paper.

The great black headlines, which for the the last four hours had been placarded all over London, took up one half of the paper.

CHINA AND JAPAN.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

JAPAN APPEALS TO HER ALLY.

BARON NAGASKI AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

CABINET COUNCIL NOW SITTING.

The headlines themselves told all that was known. The news had come without warning, and following hard upon a slight Japanese reverse on the Yalu. But the news itself was incomplete. Already the mighty engines of Fleet Street were at work. To-morrow morning's papers would provide even more sensational reading. Barely two hours ago startling intelligence had been flashed across the Channel. Orders for the mobilisation of the French Fleet had already been posted. The two great Powers, who had, only a few weeks ago, amidst a shower of congratulations, concluded an agreement which seemed likely to ensure a permanent peace, were, with a suddenness which had no parallel in the modern history of nations, on the very brink of war.

The whistle sounded for the departure of the train. Suddenly Stourton was aware of some disturbance upon the platform. A tall, fair-haired woman, whose long opera-cloak imperfectly concealed her evening clothes, was trying to make her way past the official who stood before the carriage door. Stourton, with an exclamation of alarm, sprang to his feet and let down the window. Even in that moment of astonishment he did not forget his caution. He caught up the despatch-box and held it in his left hand.

"Esther!" he exclaimed. "What is it?"

The official stood aside. The train was already moving. She had almost to run to keep up with it.

"Heslop Stanmore is in Paris!" she cried breathlessly. "I found my maid sending him a telegram. He wanted to know—exactly—when you left. Take care!"

She could keep up no longer. She was already flushed and panting. He waved his hand reassuring and shouted a farewell. Then he fastened the window and resumed his seat. "The little grey lady," he muttered to himself. "Esther's maid bribed—made friends with her down at ———, of course. He can't think that I'm such a blithering fool as to walk into another trap. If he tries it——" Stourton's fingers clasped something in the pocket of his overcoat, and his face was suddenly hard. He was thinking of the weeks of misery which this man had caused him less than a year ago. Another conflict might end differently.

Stourton's nerves were almost perfect, but he would scarcely have been human if he had not been conscious of some anxiety. Any successful tampering with his mission might mean the kindling of the war torch throughout the world. It might mean the pouring out to waste of the accumulated millions of centuries of industry, it might retard the whole progress of civilisation for many decades. The bare possibility of the thing was appalling. And yet when he stopped for a moment to reflect, the absolute security of his position was borne in upon him. He carried a fateful message with him, but it was a verbal one. There were no means of wresting from him words which his memory and tongue could alone make real. He had important papers, too, but they were in cipher,

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"'Heslop Stanmore is in Paris!'"

—not the ordinary cipher of the Foreign Office, but a simple variation of it, to which, again, the only key had been committed to his memory and destroyed. The worst that could happen to him would be delay, and it was hard to see how even that could be engineered. These reflections brought him a certain amount of consolation, but he did not for a moment relax his watchfulness, though the train was speeding now on its way to Dover without any intervening stop. He sat quite still. The despatch-box was within easy reach, a loaded revolver upon his knee.

At the pier station he descended, making his way along the platform and across the gangway to the steamer. Two men of unobtrusive appearance, quietly but unfashionably dressed, were his nearest neighbours, one walking a little behind, and one in front. No sign of recognition passed between Stourton and them, yet he knew very well who they were and what their presence meant. On board the steamer he made his way at once to the cabin which had been reserved for him. The two men ordered deck-chairs outside. With the cabin door

locked, and two of the shrewdest detectives from Scotland Yard within a few feet of him, Stourton felt fairly secure against even such a man as Heslop Stanmore, yet he never relaxed his watchfulness. He neither ate nor drank. He simply sat and watched the despatch-box.

At Calais the same programme was repeated, only this time, without speech but as though by previous arrangement, the two man shared his *coupé* in the train. Stourton, ignoring their presence, behaved exactly as though he had only himself to rely upon. With the despatch-box upon his knees, covered over by a thick travelling-rug, he sat alert and sleepless throughout the whole of the journey. Still nothing happened. Paris was reached without incident.

Here on the platform the two men closed in upon him, one on either side. Although they had no luggage, they chartered a small station omnibus, and a few minutes after the arrival of the train they were on their way to the British Embassy. The grey twilight of dawn was already breaking over the city, but there were traces still on the *boulevards* of the excitement which throughout the night had kept the streets and *cafés* thronged with people. The news from the East had stirred Paris in the same degree as London. Everywhere it was agreed that a favourable reply from England to the appeal of her ally must mean war, and already momentous steps had been taken. Stourton smiled slightly as he looked in upon one of the still brilliantly lit *cafés*. He carried the news which was to decide the question of peace and war. A word from him, and these people might have gone quietly home to their beds. And that word was to be spoken during the next few minutes.

The omnibus drew up at last before the great white stone front of the Embassy. The three men alighted, and his two companions watched Stourton admitted. Then, raising their hats slightly, they turned away. Their errand was finished.

Stourton breathed a sigh of relief as he stepped inside the hall.

"Is Sir Charles better, Morton?" he asked the man who admitted him.

"His Excellency is complaining of his head a good deal, Mr. Stourton," the man answered. "Monsieur Camillon sent for him about midnight, and has only just returned. You will find him in the study, sir. He gave orders that you were to go straight in immediately you arrived."

Stourton did not hesitate for a moment. Already he was beginning to think of his bath and a whisky-and-soda. A few more such errands as this, and even his nerves would suffer. He crossed the hall at once and entered the study.

The room was dimly lit, but a familiar figure rose at once from the couch.

"At last, Stourton. Come here to my desk, and we'll have some more light. You have the despatches?"

"You are better, Sir Charles?" Stourton asked, as he drew out his keys and laid the box before him.

"Better, but abominably ill," the Ambassador answered wearily. "Everything here is in a ferment. Camillon has lost his head. There isn't a man in the Cabinet who can discuss the position of affairs calmly. What is it to be, Stourton?"

"Peace, Sir Charles," Stourton answered. "The whole thing will fizzle out in a few days. As a matter of fact, I think even you will be surprised at the message you will have to carry to Camillon."

"You have it there? Good! Ring the bell and order a carriage. I am nearly beside myself with pain, but Camillon is waiting."

Stourton glanced at the clock. It was barely six. Sir Charles was certainly in a very queer way. His voice sounded hoarse and unnatural. His movements were the movements of a man racked with pain.

"It will take me an hour, sir, to reset the cipher," Stourton said. "In case of urgency I have the gist of the whole matter in a verbal message. Would it not be well if you delivered that unofficially to Monsieur Camillon, and I would undertake to have the despatch copied for you by eight o'clock?"

"It is a good idea," Sir Charles said wearily. "Give me your message."

"It is short enough," Stourton answered. "You are to assure Monsieur Camillon that England refuses absolutely to recognise China as a Power, and the fact of her alliance with Russia, although a source of regret to us, does not come within the scope of our obligations. We pledge ourselves not to move a single warship Eastwards or to act in any way so as to disturb the present balance of power."

"The news," Sir Charles said quietly, "is good. Be so kind, Stourton, as to ring the bell. I will be off at once."

Stourton moved to the bell, and Sir Charles, drawing up the blind, for a moment looked down upon the street below. But though his fingers rested for a moment upon the knob, Stourton never pressed it. When

"When Sir Charles turned round, he looked into the muzzle of a revolver."

Sir Charles turned round, he looked into the muzzle of a revolver.

"Are you mad, Stourton?" the Ambassador asked, taking a quick step back.

"I am not sure," was the calm answer. "At any rate, I am taking no risks. If you move a step backwards or forwards, I shall fire!"

Sir Charles became at once as motionless as a lay figure. Stourton leaned forward and switched on the electric light all round the room. Then he moved towards Sir Charles. He was beset by a horrible perplexity. He had either made a most ghastly blunder, or he was the victim of an extraordinary piece of necromancy.

"Tell me the cipher exchange for March!" he asked with dry lips.

Sir Charles shrugged his shoulders.

"Your journey seems to have upset you, Mr. Stourton," he said calmly. "Be so good as to address me, if at all, with more respect."

"The cipher exchange — for March," Stourton repeated doggedly.

Sir Charles laughed shortly.

"Do you imagine," he said, "that I am going to submit to a cross-examination from you? Have done with this folly, Mr. Stourton. Stand aside and let me pass!"

"You do not go alive from this room," Stourton answered hoarsely, "until—until—"

He leaned forward, and a sudden cry broke from his lips.

"If you attempt to escape, I shall shoot you like a dog!" he cried. "You are not Sir Charles. You are a wonderful masquerader, I admit, but that is what you are—an impostor. Come, off with your mask! Who are you, and what do you expect to get by this? Remember, you are covered, and I shoot straight. What have you to say?"

Sir Charles laughed—and at the sound the sweat broke out on Stourton's forehead.

"You there!" he gasped. "Where is Sir Charles? If you try to escape, I'll kill you!"

"Escape, my dear nephew-in-law?" was the smiling reply. "How is it possible? I am not armed, and I am not fond of firearms. Escape! Why should I think of such a thing? I am interested here—interested and even amused."

Stourton was past taunts. To think that he had been outwitted after all was maddening, but his anxiety kept him cool.

"Where is Sir Charles?"

"Doubtless at Monsieur Camillon's," was the suave answer. "I believe that the first arrangement was that he should wait there for your coming. Unfortunately a violent attack of headache compelled Sir Charles—in my person—to return unexpectedly."

"And what do you propose to do now?" Stourton asked grimly.

Heslop Stanmore shrugged his shoulders.

"My young friend," he said, "I have no plans. I am in your hands. Lock me up if you will. Put me anywhere, so that it is not necessary for you to stand with that diabolical little weapon pointed at my head."

Stourton walked to the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. Then he sat down in an easy-chair and tried to think.

All the time his eyes were fixed upon the pseudo-Ambassador.

"By means of a trick more or less ingenious, certainly lucky," he said thoughtfully, "you have obtained from me some very valuable information. The question which puzzles me is, how are you going to profit by it? That information will be placarded all over Paris by midday, and until midday you will certainly remain — my guest."

Stanmore smiled.

"I see your difficulty, my young friend," he remarked. "Let me help you, if I may. I had a use for your information, provided its tenor had been different. Five minutes earlier knowledge of war might have meant a good deal to me. The pacific intentions of your Government are simply of no interest to me. Take my parole, dispose of me as you will. I simply am not interested. If it had been more fateful news —that which you have so kindly vouchsafed to me — it might have been worth my while to have risked something to have got away. As it is, you may treat me as a harmless lunatic."

"'This young gentleman will explain.'"

Stourton suddenly sprang up. He heard a familiar voice in the hall and a sound of footsteps. He unlocked the door, and almost immediately it was thrown open. Sir Charles entered. He addressed Stourton sharply.

"What infernal muddle is this?" he exclaimed. "Surely my instructions were clear enough? I have been waiting for you at Monsieur Camillon's."

"The explanation, sir, is there," Stourton answered, pointing to the further end of the room.

The Ambassador and the pseudo-Ambassador were face to face. Sir Charles gazed at his double in horrified silence. The latter, with a gently deprecating smile, appeared to be making a deliberate examination of the details of Sir Charles's dress and person.

"Heavens, sir! who are you?" Sir Charles exclaimed at last.

Stanmore waved his hand towards Stourton.

"This young gentleman will explain," he said suavely. "Forgive my close observation; I am always interested in these little studies of mine. I perceive that I have libelled you in one or two small details. The

height and presence I could not hope to gain —I was obliged to remain seated ; but it vexes me extremely that I should have parted my hair at least an inch too much to the left. Nevertheless, Sir Charles, I trust that you will not consider me altogether a caricature."

Sir Charles had regained his composure. He eyed him up and down grimly.

"On the contrary, sir," he said, "I congratulate you. The resemblance is at any rate close enough to warrant your acquaintance with a French prison. Now, Stourton."

Stourton explained rapidly. An immense relief came into the Ambassador's face as he delivered his message.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed fervently. "I will go at once to Monsieur Camillon's, and take this effigy with me. No, I can't do that. We mustn't give ourselves away. Keep him under lock and key, Stourton, till the news is on the *boulevards*, and then kick him out. Work out your draft despatch and send Blount round with it. He will be here in half an hour."

Sir Charles hurried away. Stourton took his troublesome connection up to his own quarters, made him relinquish his wig and moustache, and brought him back to the study. He established himself in an easy-chair with a little sigh of relief.

"If one might venture to suggest a cup of coffee——" he remarked: "and— Sir Charles does not smoke. I do. I have been suffering for the last two hours."

Stourton ordered the coffee and threw him his cigarette-case. He made himself quite at home. When he had finished his work, Stourton rose and faced him sternly. Already the din on the *boulevards* had commenced.

"Stanmore," he said, "this is the second time you have tried to ruin me. Now it is my turn. What is to prevent my handing you over to the police? You are here under false pretences. In the eyes of the law you are a burglar."

Stanmore shook his head.

"My young friend," he said quietly, "you know very well that you cannot do it. You dare not admit that you were—pardon me—so easily deceived. Your Embassy would be the laughing-stock of your fellow-diplomats. Besides, the French police know me. They would examine the charge with perfect gravity—and release me!"

"If I let you go," Stourton said, "will you give me your word of honour to leave me alone in future? Try your tricks on someone else, if you will. I've had my share. I am fond of the Service, and I have had two narrow escapes—through you. Give me your word of honour that this shall be your last escapade where I am concerned, and you can go."

Stanmore shook his head gravely.

"My dear Stourton," he said, "believe me, in your own interests, I cannot do this. You are, I am pleased to say, a connection of mine, and I am very much interested in your career. The two—er—incidents to which you have referred have brightened you up amazingly. You have no idea how much you have improved already. If I were to give you that promise, you would relax your vigilance at once. No, no! It is much better as it is. Always be on your guard against me. I may turn up at any moment."

Stourton opened the door in silence. His uncle-in-law walked out.

* * * * *

Sir Charles asked Stourton to lunch with him next day. The Ambassador was in the nervous state of a man just recovering from an immense strain, and in the midst of a shower of congratulations there was one point on which he was particularly irritable. He alluded to it as soon as they were alone.

"I don't like these stories of enormous buying of English Consols and French *Rentes* just an hour before Camillon issued the news," he said. "They say that it was one man on both markets. They watch that sort of thing at Downing Street. I only hope they don't suspect a leakage."

Stourton answered Sir Charles's unspoken thought.

"I did not let him go," he said, "till the news was on the *boulevards*."

Sir Charles grunted and dismissed the subject. But it came into Stourton's mind again when at breakfast-time one morning, about a fortnight later, Esther, with a cry of delight, opened a large morocco case.

"Ronald! Did you ever see anything so beautiful?" she exclaimed breathlessly.

Stourton was reading the note.

"My dear Niece—and Nephew-in-Law—

"I have always felt that my wedding present was a most inadequate offering, and I hope that you will allow me, now that Fortune has been more kind, to make atonement. I do not often speculate, but I am thankful to say that my last venture was crowned with complete success.

"'My best regards to your husband. I envy his luxurious quarters at the Place Diploma-

tique. The view from Sir Charles's library down the Boulevard St. Antoine especially commends itself to me.

"Believe me, my dear Esther,

"Ever your affectionate Uncle."

Esther looked over her husband's shoulder.

"What does he mean, Ronald?" she asked, perplexed.

Stourton threw the note into the flames.

"I have not the least idea," he answered.

"Stourton threw the note into the flames."

The Woman Who Forgot

By
Eleanor Hoyt.

HELEN DAWSON leaned back in her uncomfortable chair and listened, with an encouraging smile, to the man at her right. He was expounding the law and gospel of game preservation. The Game Laws had held out through five courses; and, with several States and all of the Territories still untouched, the subject might reasonably be expected to last through the dinner. On the strength of this logical supposition, the young woman felt justified in trusting the situation to the smile and allowing her thoughts to wander.

She wondered, rather wearily, why one suffered and endured, to the end of being considered a desirable dinner-guest. She had attained the distinction during her first season. Ever since, she had been reaping the reward of virtue, in the shape of impossible dinner-partners.

"He's rather hopeless, dear; but you can manage anyone," said the hostess with affectionate admiration; and, under that stimulus, Helen took up her burden of freak or boor or plain idiot, and carried him triumphantly from oysters to coffee.

Looking at the thing dispassionately, the game did not seem worth the candle. She was inclined to believe that the bovine woman across the table, at whom a conscientious little man was hurling conversational darts in *banderillero* fashion, had chosen the better part. Why try to be entertaining? Why lead a man on to talk Game Laws through innumerable courses? If she were consistently dull, clever men would be detailed to float her, to keep her conversational head above water. As it was, she herself was a patent conversation-preserver, and her guardian angel slept while her hostesses sorted their dinner-cards.

She studied the mass of pink roses in the centre of the table carefully, exhaustively; then suddenly, with a certain air of resolve, raised her wonderful grey eyes and looked across the roses at Howard Colby.

He was talking to a blonde woman with expressive shoulders and an overworked dimple. The pink light from the shaded candles seemed foolishly out of place on his rugged, smooth-shaven face. Helen noticed with a touch of whimsical amusement its impotent effort to soften the outlines of the stubborn jaw and the firm lips. The face was made for uncompromising white light, she thought. At the hint, memory brushed aside the roses and the rose-light and showed her the dark, strong face in a blaze of sunlight, against a blinding glare of summer sea.

It was in August, on the cliff. There had been other days before that—days that counted for gay comradeship and happiness—but it was then that the man's face came between her and the sea, shutting out the waves, the sky, the world, stooping to her

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with reckless eyes and with thirsty lips, begging, demanding, taking, while her own eyes closed and her life-anchors dragged at their cables.

She had gone away—and he had not followed her. One may be weak, and not quite mad.

In August. Now December had come. She had seen him once since then—once, in a crowd. His wife had been back from Europe since September. She was talking to the host at the other end of the table, an overdressed little woman with peevish insipidity written in every line of her face. Boy and girl love-matches are uncertain investments in this world of changing values. Helen looked at her; then her eyes wandered back across the roses. Measured by heartache, the months had been long. There had been time for a man to forget.

Suddenly the man turned from the woman beside him, turned swiftly, surely, as though answering a call, and his dark eyes met the grey ones in the shimmering rose-light.

Days? Years? August had come back for its own.

"So Idaho is still a happy hunting-ground?" the woman heard her own voice saying, in response to a period in the hunter's monologue. The smile that had encouraged him was still on her lips.

She did not look across the roses again. Opposite her, a doctor, famous for his psychical experiments, was riding his hobby. Snatches of his talk floated to her and mixed with the Idaho stories.

"There's no doubt about it," he was saying emphatically; "the moral uses of hypnotism are simply incalculable—incalculable. I've had the most wonderful results, and yet we are only at the beginning of the thing. We haven't really crossed the threshold. I've cured the cigarette habit. I've set dipsomaniacs on their feet. I've banished the morphine devils. I've—why, good Heavens! I'm coming mighty near miracle working, and I'm not fairly started. I only hope I'll live to see the thing develop."

The doctor's voice sank to a lower level. Helen found herself straining her ears to catch his words.

"Infatuation? Why, of course. That is right in line," he said in answer to some question from his companion. "I had a remarkable case of that kind—married man, nice wife, charming girl—good girl, too. The man and girl were thrown together while the wife was away. Hopeless infatuation on the man's part. Girl desperately in love. The man was a decent sort, but he didn't have the strength to break the thing off. Neither did the girl. The wife understood and was wretched. Her husband made a clean breast of it to her, and she was the right sort. She saw that he was weak, not bad. She didn't row him or blame him. She just quietly broke her heart. The girl wasn't any happier than the wife. Everyone was miserable.

"The man came to me. His wife came with him, and the girl knew he was coming.

"Talking to a blonde woman with expressive shoulders."

I heard the whole story and gave him a treatment. There was no use in suggesting, at the start, that he didn't love the girl. I took an easier hypnotic line. I told him he couldn't go to her house.

"He walked past there time after time the next day, but he couldn't go up the steps and ring the bell. The girl watched him from behind the curtains. How do I know? She told me. Oh, yes; she came to see me. She thought it might help me to influence him if I knew her. I liked that girl. Funny that two such women could love a man so

weak that he had to have another man do his bracing for him.

"Hypnotise her? No; she didn't want to be hypnotised. I don't believe she ever thought of it.

"I cured that man. He doesn't know the girl is on earth; or, if he does, he doesn't care. He's as sane as anyone, and his wife is the happiest woman in the town. You never saw two people so grateful. I'm proud of that couple."

Miss Dawson had forgotten the Idaho hunting. She was leaning forward with wide-open eyes and parted lips.

"And the girl?" she asked breathlessly. The doctor looked at her over his glasses.

"The girl?" he echoed. "Oh, yes; the girl. I don't know what became of the girl."

Dr. Winter's waiting-room was crowded at ten o'clock on the morning after the dinner. It was usually crowded. The patients justified their title and cultivated patience on a monumental scale. If they could not wait, they might go. Which alternative they chose was a matter of utter indifference to the doctor.

He could afford to be independent. The old following which he had gained as a general practitioner of unusual ability was loyal. His reputation as a pioneer in the medical movement towards applied psychics brought him a host of patients, and, rather to his distress, he found himself becoming a fad. For him, an interview with a patient did not mean merely looking at a tongue, feeling a pulse, and writing a prescription. It meant a study of mental, moral, and physical conditions, and a determined effort to subjectively control those conditions. If he could hypnotise and treat a patient in half an hour, well and good. If it required three hours, quite as well, quite as good. The one vital question was the success of the effort. Meanwhile, the patients in the outer room waited, or went home.

Helen Dawson waited.

While she waited, she thought. The struggle had gone with the night. Now she was only very tired and, in a dull, numb way, indifferent. She did not shrink from telling her story to the man behind the closed office doors. The crucifixion of her soul had come when she acknowledged to herself that she must clutch at some support outside herself. Now her pride lay mute and motionless.

It mattered very little to what source she turned for help. She had failed, herself. Heart hunger was stronger than her conscience. A better woman would have found strength in prayer. She had told herself that, over and over. Well, then, she was not good. She had prayed, prayed blindly and passionately for months. The prayer had not been an unreasonable one, only a cry for courage. "Make me brave! make me brave! make me brave!" She had never asked for happiness.

A girl may pray for happiness. The woman's prayer is: "Make me brave!"

And this woman had thought her prayer answered, because she learned a dumb endurance and no temptation came her way.

She smiled an unmirthful smile, to think how swiftly her carefully builded house of cards had fallen when she started from the dressing-room to her carriage the night before and found him waiting at the foot of the stairs.

She had known he would be there. She was conscious of him even before she saw him. The consciousness thrilled through every vein and nerve, clutched at her heart and at her throat; but, because she was a woman, trained in the Spartan school of social convention, she was conscious, too, of the two motionless, observant footmen by the door.

She went down the stairs slowly, carelessly, a gracious, slender figure all in shimmering white. She met the reckless, upturned face and hungry eyes with smiling indifference.

"You will be at home to-morrow at three?" he asked, as he stood by the open carriage door; and she had answered "No" quite coolly, quite positively.

"I shall come," he said as positively.

The door closed. The carriage rolled away into the night, and the woman, sinking down among the furs, shook dumbly with the nervous chill that is so often the price of a woman's dry eyes.

Brave! She knew herself for a coward—but she was glad to remember that the "No" was said with steady lips.

The night was long, and in the morning she still looked herself in the eyes contemptuously and said "Coward!" Yet there are different kinds of courage. It is a strong woman who recognises her own weakness and acknowledges it. Few men are brave enough for that. Helen Dawson had been honest with herself. Perhaps, after all, the prayers were not quite answered.

"You will see him when he comes," she said to herself scornfully.

"If not to-morrow, then another day. You are weak. Your conscience will not

"Days that counted for gay comradeship and happiness."

stand against his calling and the answer in your heart. You have thought yourself strong because he was strong, or generous, or cautious — who knows which? — but now——"

Then, wincing under the lash of her own self-knowledge and contempt, she thought of the girl who would not be hypnotised, but who was willing that the man should forget. She had been sorry for the girl when she heard the story; had thought her brave. Now she called her fool. To be willing to forget, to accept healing, there was the real courage. If hypnotism could put one beyond temptation, if it could prevent the ruin of lives, there was cowardice in refusing its aid.

The price was the giving up of memories that were the heart of life! Well, one paid the price. Cowardice! Courage! Who could mark the boundary lines between the two? To be self-sufficient might be best, but, surely, to pay the penalty of weakness must be good.

The man had given up the struggle. If this doctor who played with souls could give her the power her moral nature lacked, that would be better than shipwreck.

The office door opened. A white-capped nurse came quietly to the side of the woman whose great, grey eyes were staring wearily at the smouldering fire in the open grate.

"The doctor will see you now, Miss Dawson," she said, with a note of admiration in her professional tones, and her eyes followed enviously the graceful, exquisitely gowned figure as it passed through the door which closed behind it.

Dr. Winter was used to surprises. If he was surprised to see Helen Dawson, there was nothing in his face or manner to suggest the fact. His keen eyes, behind their glasses, met her slightly defiant eyes with disarming friendliness. He pulled a big armchair before the fire.

"Sit down there, child, and tell me about it," he said cheerfully.

Helen sank into the chair and looked up at the genial face. She was not the sort of woman whom one calls "child." The word sounded odd, but she did not resent it. On the contrary, she liked it. Possibly it was the human kindliness in the voice that made the term distinctly comforting.

She wondered that, meeting Dr. Winter socially, she had never noticed the friendliness in his voice and the encouraging, compelling power in his eyes.

"How much must I tell you?" she asked quietly. "I am in love. It is a sin, and I am a coward. Can you help me?"

Surely her pride was dead and buried deep, she thought, as she listened to her own dull, emotionless voice.

The doctor's eyes were even kindlier than at first.

"We misuse that word 'sin,'" he said gently. "And the man?"

"He—is a man. You do not want to know his name." The doctor shook his head.

"It is altogether hopeless?"

"He is married."

A dull red crept into her cheeks and died there, but the doctor's face showed nothing save sympathy.

"And you see each other often?"

"We have not spoken to each other for months, until yesterday. We have tried to do what was right; but—he is coming this afternoon." There was a ring of helplessness in the low voice. There was a desperate, childish appeal in the averted face, to whose resolute lips and grave, strong lines a heart was giving the lie.

Dr. Winter put a firm, friendly hand on the woman's shoulder.

"You do not want to see him?"

"I must not."

"But you would?"

"I—love him."

"You could go away from home this afternoon."

"Then it would be to-morrow."

"You want to stop caring?"

She did not answer for a few moments. She closed her eyes, and her face looked very white and cold and still against the dark leather of the high chair-back. At last she met the doctor's eyes.

"Yes," she said slowly, painfully, "I want to stop caring. I want to forget that I ever cared."

The doctor took off his glasses and wiped them carefully, scrupulously.

"You are a brave woman," he said brusquely. "You shall have what you want."

At three o'clock that afternoon, Helen Dawson, sitting in her own room, heard the front door-bell ring. Something cold closed tightly round her heart, but she did not move. A servant tapped at the door and handed her a card.

"Mr. Howard Colby." The letters looked very large and distinct. Mechanically she tore the card in pieces and dropped them carefully, one by one, into the waste basket.

"I—can—not—see—the — gentleman," she said deliberately, as one who repeats a lesson.

The servant hesitated.

"If you please, miss, he said it was very important."

"I cannot see him," she repeated, still in the lifeless, measured tone. Then, as the servant turned to go, with a puzzled look on his usually expressionless face, she added—

"Carter, I am never at home to Mr. Colby. Please remember that."

The door closed behind him. She made a quick movement towards the window, but stopped, stood for a moment, listening vaguely, sat down in her chair, and picked up her book.

Howard Colby called again and again. He was not a man to accept defeat readily, and he told himself that she had not forgotten, that her conscience, not her heart, fought against him. He haunted the houses of her intimate friends, but she did not come. She went nowhere in those days, save to the doctor's. The friends mentioned casually that she was ill—a touch of *grippe*, they believed — nothing serious.

"A desperate, childish appeal in the averted face."

Gradually the space between the visits to Dr. Winter's office lengthened. Gradually the fever and unrest faded from her days. After two weeks she began her social round once more. The second evening she met Howard Colby, but the meeting gave her no special sensation of any kind. He was an agreeable man, and he was undeniably good-looking; but he was nothing to her.

She met his few hot words of reproach and pleading with a certain mild surprise. No breath of August stirred in her heart. No hint of answering passion wakened. She was not angry—only profoundly indifferent. He went away, white with rage and pain, cursing the folly of man and the fickleness of woman; but surgery may heal mind as well as body. The knife had cut deep enough to cure.

So the man forgot.

They met often. He was but one man of many to her.

They were never alone together.

She walked through the days serenely, gaily. No one noticed a change in her; but, sometimes, in the midst of her content, she was conscious of a vague sense of loss, of a something missing, whose absence brought no grief.

January slipped by. February followed. The woman who had forgotten still drove regularly to the house on the quiet side street where Dr. Winter's name was carved on an old brass knocker. There were ten days between the visits now; but the hypnotist was not yet willing to say that his

suggestion had become a fixed idea, that he had worked a permanent cure.

In March, bad news came. Robert Dawson, Helen's only brother, was critically ill in Quebec.

She took the first train for Quebec, and began a sturdy fight against death for a man's life.

For a week the struggle was a grim one, with the odds against doctor and nurse. During the second week the chances were even. On the nineteenth day the doctor turned to Helen and smiled.

"He'll pull through," he said. "Go and rest."

She went to bed for the first time since her arrival in Quebec, and slept the heavy, dreamless sleep of utter exhaustion.

It was late the next day when she wakened.

The house was very still. Her window-shades were down, making a dim half-light in the unfamiliar room. She opened her eyes and looked sleepily around her. Then she stirred restlessly. There was an odd pain in her heart, a queer tightening of her throat that made her feel ill and faint. Perhaps she had tried her strength too far. Was she ill, or only tired, desperately tired?

She lay back on her pillow with pain and unhappiness flooding through brain and body and heart.

It was all familiar. She had lived with it before; but her brain, still clogged with sleep, groped blindly for the meaning of the suffering.

A ray of sunlight filtered through the window-shade and flickered wanly on the wall. Her eyes rested on it drowsily. Such a mere ghost of a sunbeam, she thought wearily. Summer sunshine was a braver thing than that—and at the thought she was awake.

She understood.

All the old memories came surging back—all the love, the struggle, the vain longing.

Peace had gone, but the hurt was here again.

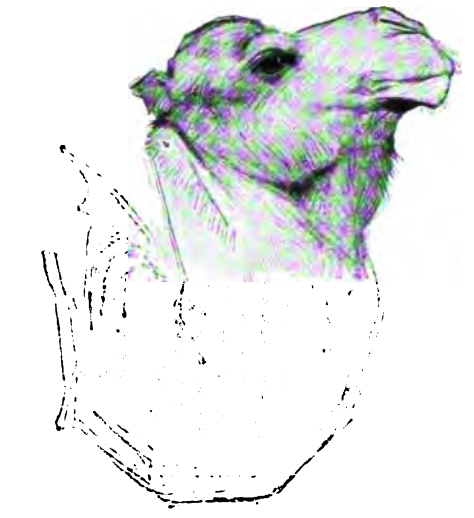
"Thank God! Thank God!" she sobbed, as she gathered the old pain to her heart.

"'Carter, I am never at home to Mr. Colby. Please remember that.'"

THE ROGUES OF A ZOO.

By A. W. ROLKER.*

IN our menageries, there are good animals and bad animals; bad individuals among the good species, and occasionally good ones among the bad—exactly as we have good and bad tribes among the races of men, and bad and good individuals among those tribes. As might be expected, the most confirmed, incorrigible scamps of a menagerie are among the felines, those great, splendid cats of gorgeous-coloured pelts, whose every impulse and instinct seem treachery and destruction. And yet the lion and his family contribute but partly to the list of dangerous captives. Almost every family, including even those of birds, has its dangerous members—taken all in all, a surprisingly numerous and formidable array of "zoo" rogues.



"This crooked-necked servant of man has turned rogue."

Of all the big, dangerous cats, none is more unapproachable and more treacherous than the black panther. Hailing from the heart of the deepest African jungle, lithe and supple of body, alert and nervous, this stealthy marauder exceeds in ferocity even a Bengal tiger. He is the only big feline that the lion-trainer does not venture to train; and he is the only cat so absolutely distrustful that he shuns even the light of day. Often he will lie all day long in a dusky corner of his cage, his yellow slit-eyes shifting and gleaming restlessly. Even the feeding-hour, when pandemonium breaks loose among the big cages, when hungry roars and squeals mingle with impatient snarls and impacts of heavy bodies against steel bars, is apt to have no effect on him. He may lie eyeing his chunk of raw beef suspiciously, and not venture forth until day has waned and the last visitor has left, to tear meat from bones with his long, white fangs. In fact, so ugly and vicious is this beast that frequently he turns on his own kind, and in many instances it is impossible to cage him, even with a mate.

In the Walter Main Circus menagerie, a fierce duel, which did not end even after life was extinct, happened one night between "Bob" and "Bess," a pair of fine black panthers but recently imported from Africa direct. In the small, dark hours of morning the keeper on watch was startled by angry snarls, soft pads falling heavily, and the clatter of steel bars in their sockets. The animals, both with wide gashes laid open in their thick, glossy pelts, were rolling over and over, panting and snarling, and each sinking fangs and claws deep into the other, unmindful of the prods of a pitchfork with which the lone witness tried to separate them. The frightful pace of the fight soon told, and with a piercing cry one fastened his jaws on the other's throat and, although seemingly lifeless, held on in a death-grip that brought the victor to the ground.

In too many cases, but little chivalry exists between a pair of cat animals, and sometimes, in "turning" violently, a beast exhibits the most cunning treachery, as in the case of "Señor Lopez," the New York Zoological Park jaguar, who killed "Rayda," his new cage-mate, in one of the foulest attacks of which even a human traitor might be guilty. Of all the splendid cat animals in the Park's splendid lion-house, Lopez was the last whom the experts considered treacherous. He was a fine, tall, noble beast, big and powerful as many an Indian tiger, with a

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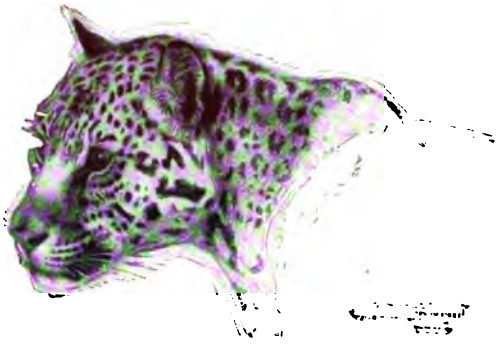
skin of rich yellow, beautifully marked with clear, black spots, and a quick, intelligent, handsome face. He was considered an exemplary animal. Unlike vicious cats, he neither snarled nor charged the bars of his cage, but delighted in lying on his back, kitten fashion, while the keeper scratched



THE JAGUAR "RAYDA."

with a stick the thick, glossy pelt, and the big fellow purred with satisfaction. Both physically and in disposition he was such a splendid animal that it was decided to secure him a mate. And all the way from Hamburg, in a little oak travelling-cage, Rayda came, a beautiful, almost full-grown female jaguar, so docile that she answered to name and fawned against the bars of her cage for the caress and pats of her keeper.

Before a pair of wild animals are caged together, it is necessary to find how they will get along. Rayda's little cage was raised to the level of Lopez's spacious one. The big fellow was greatly interested in his visitor. He bounded back and forth, showing every evidence of joy, and when the cages were pushed bars to bars, he reached through and passed a huge, soft paw across her back while she fawned as near as possible, not only without the least sign of fear, but purring with satisfaction, and interested only in the prospects of a larger cage and a companion in captivity.

For two days the cages were face to face, Lopez continuing to coax and court his newfound friend ; and all the time with murder in his mind. Not even Rayda's keen, wild instinct penetrated the treachery ; for when the doors were opened, with every evidence of glee she bounded into the den. From the instant she entered, the true purpose of the jaguar was shown. He lay in a far corner—his entire bearing, even to the expression of his face, changed. Crouching low, every nerve and sinew tense and twitching nervously for his aim, the great beast was on the verge of a spring. Suddenly the yellow body darted through the cage in a long, high bound, and before the friendly animal could raise a paw in defence, he had her by the neck and held on like a bulldog, sinking his teeth deeper and deeper till they crunched on the vertebræ. From the first bite Rayda seemed utterly helpless. The enraged jaguar was beaten over the head and prodded in the face with iron bars and poles. But he merely closed his eyes and tightened his grip, until the punishment rained so thick that he jumped to his feet, took the one-hundred-and-fifty-pound body as a cat holds a kitten, and bounded to a far corner of his cage. It was fully a minute before the murderer could be forced from his prey ; and what so recently had been a lovable although wild creature lay dead.

At first it was supposed that Lopez's canine teeth had penetrated the jugular vein, but an autopsy revealed the strength of the jaguar's frightful jaws. Two of the neck vertebræ had been crushed and splintered, and the spinal cord had been penetrated by fragments of the bone, causing paralysis almost from the very first.

Often, especially in trained wild-animal shows, an obedient and perfectly manageable feline develops into a rogue ; in fact, when these huge cats grow old and lazy, they become slow to obey their masters, and, upon being urged repeatedly, the day comes when they resent and turn on their trainers. Such a case was that of the splendid performing tiger, "Rajah," of the Frank C. Bostock animal show. Rajah was a mighty, handsome beast, measuring nearly twelve feet from tip to tip, with a face full of grim wrinkles and a bright, smooth, deep orange pelt, black-striped as if painted. As a performer he had few equals ; he was quick to learn and quick to obey, and, best of all, he seemed to like his work. He had learned to sit on his haunches like a poodle, to wrestle with his trainer, to jump through a hoop, and to play see-saw on a huge plank with another big tiger.

For five years Rajah was a model animal, and then the inevitable change came. He seemed to lose interest. He became slow to obey and sulked. A sulking tiger who threatens to turn adds spectacularly to the interest of a performance, and, always within limits, a trainer prizes an animal of this kind. Rajah passed this limit one afternoon

while performing in the big stage-cage. He got his cue, but never budged, and when the long whalebone trainer's whip flicked him lightly, back went the ears, the mouth opened, the lips drew back, showing long, yellow teeth, and, as the tail switched, the beast crouched for a spring. It was high time to have it out on the spot. With a whip in each hand the trainer cut the fine fellow right and left, and it seemed as if the tiger were cowed, when, quick as lightning, he turned with an angry snarl, let out a vicious, blood-curdling cry and shot through the air. Down went the man, the tiger's claws fastened in a shoulder, splintering the blade.

When a tiger attacks a man, generally he tries to "get all over him" at once, but, strangely, this beast kept his hold like a bulldog, dragged the yelling prey to a corner of the huge cage, and made ready for defence. From all sides ran trainers and keepers, with whips and clubs and bars and pitchforks, to fight the blood-mad brute; but it was not until the muzzle of a six-shooter was thrust against his face and a singeing blank cartridge emptied that he let go his hold, to wander into an exhibiting-cage, where he will finish his days.

"KAJAH."

"Let out a vicious, blood-curdling cry and shot through the air."

Another distinct type of a zoo rogue is the beast that goes wrong owing to accidental

temptation—like "Shaggy," a colleague of Rajah, and an exceedingly intelligent, tractable Rocky Mountain grizzly, who reverted to savagery and turned man-killer in a twinkling, owing to the unfortunate mis-step and fall of his trainer. Shaggy was a big, handsome, grey old fellow, with a jungle-thick coat and a lumbering, awkward gait. and a funny twinkle that made him particularly adaptable for his part of clown in a remarkably trained group of fourteen bears. He had come under the hands of his teacher when but a helpless cub, had never lost his liking for caresses, and, although the mightiest beast in the collection, was least suspected of being dangerous. Once, when a striped hyæna hung to the ankle of his friend, he had run to the rescue, had cut loose right and left with his ponderous fore-paws, and had bitten and torn and mangled the ugly beast to death before he could be beaten off. Among his accomplishments were that of turning admirably grotesque somersaults, and the more difficult feat of balancing himself on his hind-legs on a three-foot wooden sphere. Not a scratch or a scar had his trainer to show for the years of work he had put in with the bear. And yet, without an instant's warning, this same beast attacked and injured his master so that when rescued he was semi-demented, and so dreadfully cut and lacerated that the surgeons decided it useless to try to save his life.

The accident happened one winter afternoon in Hednesford, a colliery town in Staffordshire, when the show was unusually thronged as the result of a coal strike, and when frost on the ground was trampled to slippery mud by the feet of the crowd. The trainer, a man named Daniels, ascended the short ladder leading to the door of the bears' cage, the soles of his boots clotted with mud from the mess underfoot.

Nagged by the excitement of a riotous, half-drunken army of spectators, and sleepy and ill-tempered after the rough-road journey of the night before, the bears lay, ugly and forbidding, huddled in a heap. As the band struck up a sharp fanfare—the warning of the coming of the master—contrary to training, and as if preconcertedly, not a bear stirred. The next moment, when Daniels, entering and closing the door after him, slipped and fell heavily to the floor, a dozen of the big angry customers, every ferocious instinct aroused at seeing the conqueror prostrate, were on their feet. With a deep, savage growl, Shaggy, the grizzly, jumped to the fore with incredible agility, and before the unfortunate man could move a hand in defence, the bear was upon him—"worrying" him. As if starved, and plunging into a long-expected meal, the mad monster sank his teeth into the man's side, and rolled him and tumbled him, and picked him up and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat; while, contrary to rule in such experiences, the riotous throng, a typical strike mob, crowded nearer and nearer the cage for closer view, thus making arrival of assistance almost impossible. Keeps and trainers tried in vain to butt through the press of humanity, while shouts and cries and yells threatened a riot and spurred the bear, who, crazed by the taste of blood, bit and tore and pawed and mangled his helpless victim until the owner of the show, a man of herculean strength, picked up an oak club, clubbed his way through the crowd, entered the cage, and attacked the bear. Three times the rescuer, dragging his burden by the neck and fighting with his free arm, took the man from the bear, and each time, at the very door of the cage, the beast regained his prey, until a terrific, luckily placed blow across the nose sent him prostrate and stunned. Then the quivering, mangled, whimpering Thing, a brave man fifteen minutes before, was borne on a shutter to a near-by inn, where he died, blessing his rescuer over and over again, a half-dozen surgeons gazing helplessly on—a victim of a rogue supposed by some a rarely vicious and much maligned beast.

Formidable and treacherous though all zoo rogues are, by the profession none probably is so thoroughly despised as the hyæna, that striped or spotted, sloped-back, bristly, loping, gawky, green-eyed ghoul that laughs in shrieks when she should cry, and whose iron jaws can crush and crunch bones that would seem too thick and tough even for those of a lion or tiger. Abject cowards to the core, these creatures rarely attack man or beast unless they can grab treacherously from behind, or unless they greatly outnumber the enemy, as happened in the Barnum and Bailey show when, in the darkness, an animal surgeon blundered into a hyæna-den in the circus winter quarters at Bridgeport, Conn.

There was in this Noah's Ark, alongside a cage of hyænas, a duplicate cage containing a young lion cub. The little fellow, prized because one of an exceptionally fine litter, was indisposed and under treatment by the menagerie surgeon, who, one night, shortly before retiring, planned a last call on his patient. Anxious to finish his work, the man

"SHAGGY," THE GRIZZLY BEAR,
"Who reverted to savagery and turned man-killer in a twinkling."

took a lantern, hastened to a cage, opened the door, and was in the midst of half a dozen snarling, ugly hyænas. In the semi-darkness he had mistaken the cages. With bristling hair, teeth gnashing, snarling, the beasts attacked, now darting forward to fasten their fangs, and again dodging back to escape the blows from the lantern, while one ugly customer who had been struck stood in a corner loping up and down in one spot, giving vent to the most freakish, fiendish laughter. The surgeon, not a practical wild animal man, beat right and left with his lantern, instinctively doing the only proper thing for defence, until the brutes stood cowed and cornered. Instead of backing towards the door, however, the captive lost his head, and had scarcely turned to make a break for liberty when he went down with a yell, grabbed at an ankle and a calf by a pair of hyænas. Like a flash the others were upon him. Into both arms, a hip, a leg, and two ankles sank the sharp teeth, holding tight and tearing, while the tortured man cried for help. Night keepers with iron scrapers ran to the rescue and soon drove off the cowardly foe. Much bruised and considerably torn, the victim picked himself up, while the loping dancer's mad laughter grated hard and shrill in the night.

Among the birds is at least one dangerous wild captive whom few would pick as a formidable rogue. This is the ostrich—that huge, greyish-brown bird, whose long, stout, fleet legs can outrun the fastest horse ever put on a track, and would put to blush the business end of a mule. Gazing at one of these great-bodied, snake-necked, small-headed, and big-eyed creatures as he stands stupidly in a stall of a menagerie, one would never suspect him of the tremendous execution of which he is capable. A single kick from an ostrich is enough to fell a hyæna, to knock over a full-grown leopard, or to

break the leg of a man as if it were pipe-stem.

A serious attack by an angry ostrich happened a couple of years ago, when a green keeper entered the cage of one of these birds at the Glen Island menagerie and prodded him with a fork. The ostrich, a crabbed old bird, had turned repeatedly on a former keeper and driven him from the stall, and it required little provocation to madden him to attack a stranger. While spreading straw, the man carelessly pricked the animal with a prong of the fork, and like a flash the great bird began to fight.

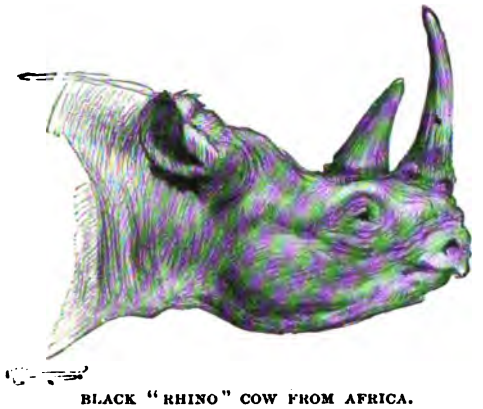
HYÆNAS.
"The green-eyed ghouls that laugh in shrieks when they should cry."

He jumped high in the air and, on coming down, kicked out forward, ripping downward with frightful force, the long, sharp claws of his toes cutting through clothes and gashing the breast in two wide, parallel slashes, clean to the bones. Down went the man and, with one of those lionlike roars which so often deceives the African desert traveller, the furious bird jumped in the air and brought his two hundred and eighty pounds down upon him, kicking, sending sledge-hammer pecks from his long, hard bill, and using his weight to trample and jounce the life out of the prostrate one. Under the fierce charge the man was helpless as a child and was unconscious when rescued. Examination showed that if the claws had struck six inches lower, the victim would have been disembowelled.

From time immemorial the camel has been considered a docile beast; but there are instances when even this tall, gawky, hump-backed, crooked-necked servant of man has turned rogue. When the camel attacks, it is with teeth and feet. The broad, flat, dull grinders, intended by Nature to masticate grass and grain, turn to frightful weapons when used as a means of attack and defence, and yet the biting of an infuriated camel is as nothing compared to the terrific execution of which the beast is capable with its legs. Like most wild animals of heavy weight, the camel utilises it so that a victim, once under its feet, rarely escapes being trampled to a pulp. What happens to an enemy attacked by one of these creatures was shown in the Adam Forepaugh Circus menagerie, when a rogue camel trampled a half-grown one-hundred-and-fifty-pound pet black bear who had escaped from his cage.

Among a herd of twenty fine camels belonging to this show was "Bedouin," a beautiful "racing camel," fresh from Arabia. His back still showed half-healed scars of saddle-galls; he had been otherwise abused and, despite the depressing effect of a long sea voyage, was so extremely ugly that he had to be muzzled. In fact, he was so

vicious that only the awe-inspiring presence of a huge elephant on each side prevented his running away and clearing the streets. As an inmate of a stationary zoo, Bedouin would not have been so dangerous; but in a circus menagerie, where men and beast are



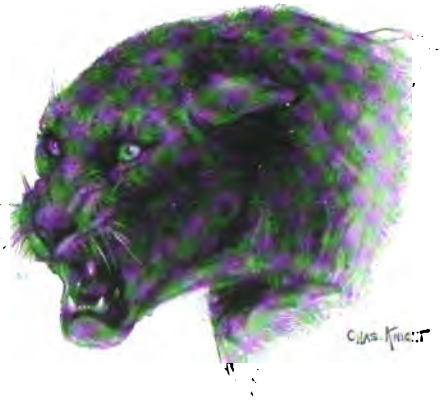
BLACK "RHINO" COW FROM AFRICA.

crowded and where frequent handling of the animals is necessary, he was a risky captive to have around. Exactly like an ugly horse, he poked back his ears, gave vent to a harsh, weird, rasping cry, and snapped and bit and kicked so no one could near him.

One morning, a mischievous, half-grown black bear found a plank loose in his cage, ripped it up, widened the hole, and darted from tent to tent, pursued by a score of animal-men, who finally cornered him in front of the stall of the bad camel. From the moment the intruder appeared, the ugly beast prepared for attack. Ears thrown back, mouth and nostrils wide open, the ordinarily stolid camel-face was distorted with demonlike fury. In vain the men tried to head off the bear. He backed more and more towards the rogue, unmindful of danger until, with incredible speed, the yellow head shot forth like that of a python. With a weird cry of defiance, as if the heavy bear were a mere whisp of hay, with his big mouth, he grasped the unfortunate by the neck, lifted him high from the floor, and the next moment poor Bruin was under foot. The mad camel jumped up and down on his fore-legs until the fine young beast lay unrecognisable and flattened like a piece of blotting-paper.

If the camel is only occasionally a sinner, as a species of hardened criminals among placid, herbiverous animals, none is worse than the bison or American buffalo. Towards man and beast, and even among themselves, these vicious, vindictive, and agile brutes, whose half-brothers on other continents do not fear even the terrific onslaught of lions and tigers, are in a state of almost continual warfare. Eagerly cropping grass from a meadow, or luxuriously wallowing in the swamp-mud of their ranges, a herd of these giant, brown, ponderous-headed, shaggy patriarchs make a scene of peace and contentment. Yet they are among the wickedest rogues and most aggressive fighters ever seen in a zoo. Sullen and ugly, they often become furious to madness without the least provocation, and frequently attack one another with serious or fatal results.

A fight of this sort was that between "Antonio," a king of rogues in the fine herd at the New York Zoological Park, and "Black Beauty," a young, magnificent, full-grown bull. The fight began when, without the least apparent cause, Antonio attacked his rival. Battering-ram head lowered, tail stiff, and eyes red, the wicked-horned brute galloped across the range, bearing down on the distant inoffensive youngster, who stood sniffing the air, pawing the ground, and working himself into a fury, until, with a snort and a toss of the head, he started to meet the foe. Down went the nose towards the ground, the short, thick horns showing through the shaggy tangle or hair, and with the "Hugh! hugh!" of fury escaping the wide, red nostrils at every bound, he charged headlong, like an animated, irresistible catapult. With the frightful momentum of two 2,000-pound bodies moving at the speed of



BLACK PANTHER.

race-horses, the bulls came together in a cloud of dust and sod. Antonio went down. Had the bulls met head on, their necks must have been broken. However, only Antonio lay prostrate, trying desperately to rise and to bellow, while, contrary to bison custom,

the victor refused to follow his advantage, and turned to take his place at the head of the herd.

Antonio's wound was a dreadful one. With the full impact of his ton weight, Black Beauty had battered against the breast of his antagonist, burying his frightful horn to the butt, at the same time rooting upwards with the full strength of his wonderful neck. Torn and ragged was the wound, ten inches long, four inches wide, and clear into a lung. Every time the poor creature breathed, the air wheezed out of the awful gore, and within twelve hours he was dead—a rogue killed and another evolved; for to-day Black Beauty is as vicious as Antonio was at his worst.

One of the most mighty and most formidable zoo rogues is that rare captive, the rhinoceros. Among numerous distinct species of this animal, some, like the Javanese rhinoceros, become so docile that natives saddle and ride them much as we ride horses. But some of these hideous-headed, ponderous, and wonderfully agile beasts are among the most ferocious in captivity. The Central Park menagerie in New York has one of this sort, "Smiles," the black "rhino" cow from Africa, a sad instance, showing how a wild animal may be made irreparably ugly by neglect and abuse.

For ten years this unfortunate was cooped in a cage too small to turn around in, travelling five thousand miles a season with a circus, and when finally turned loose in a spacious elephant-stall in the Park, she proved one of the most vicious beasts in the menagerie. Unable to see well ahead in a straight line (owing to the position of the eyes), and guided mainly by most acute scent and hearing, at first the least suspicious noise excited the cow to a frenzy, and she would rush like a mad bull, driving her fourteen-inch horn through the two-inch sheathing of her stall, and knocking the planks into splinters. In time, after her stall was lined with sheet-iron, she calmed down; but even to-day, after the "rhino" has spent seventeen years in her new home, it would be worth his life for a keeper to enter the stall without first roping and tying the beast. And, at that, she once managed to break loose and came within an ace of getting her man.

Early one morning, Smiles's keeper was alone in the big elephant-house, forking straw in a corner of her stall, ropes creaking, the "rhino" working and straining furiously against the fetters around her neck and head, when, with a crack, one of the ropes parted. Startled, the man tried to make a rush for the door, but with a mighty twist of the ugly head and neck, the animal broke the remaining rope, and at a glance the keeper saw he was not only headed off, but cornered. The beast rushed with lowered head and horn tilted forward to run its keeper through. With a yell for help, the man bounded towards the wall. About eight feet from the floor was a horizontal joist, and with a superhuman effort he jumped for this, reached it, and drew himself up in the very nick of time. The "rhino" struck him head first, rooting upwards with her horn. The murderous thing struck in the opening of the trousers' leg, ripped overalls, uniform breeches, and drawers from ankle to hip, but not as much as scratched the skin. The noise and rumpus of the attack brought assistance, and with pitchforks and iron bars the bad cow was driven off, and the keeper rescued from his perch.

Numerous as the menagerie rogues and their diverse and perilous attacks may appear, the greatest rogue and murderer of them all remains to be described. This is the rogue or "must" elephant. In his frightful paroxysms of rage, the enormous animal recognises neither friend nor foe. To sweep like lightning with the huge python trunk, grasp a keeper and hurl him from on high or under frightful feet, to impale him on polished, four-foot tusks, or, kneeling, crush him to an unrecognisable mass, this becomes the aim of the erstwhile gentle, willing friend. With the supernatural strength of madness, a rogue will snap massive leg-chains as if they were of bog-grass, splinter his stall with his tusks, and smash six-inch square timbers to flinders.

One of the more recent instances of bad elephants was Barnum and Bailey's famous clown "Mandarin," who killed three men and maimed a fourth, and was finally strangled by a steam winch on board the steamship *Minneapolis*, just before the menagerie reached New York harbour from its tour abroad. As a tall, gaunt, hungry five-year-old, Mandarin had joined the show thirty years ago, had grown into a splendid, intelligent, grey mountain of good nature, and never showed even a trace of ugliness until the circus was "doing" France. Flap ears cocked forward, trunk swinging restlessly, and little eyes growing more and more bloodshot, the fine fellow stood, ceaselessly swaying his six tons from side to side. The animal, however, showed no inclination

"MANDARIN."

"Who killed three men and maimed a fourth."

towards ugliness until a substitute trainer was duped into putting the tricky old rascal through his paces. The man laid himself flat on the ground to have the elephant walk over him, exactly as the big clown had walked over men thousands of times before. As usual, the beast advanced, head bobbing with every step; he lifted his ponderous foot, let it hover over the man, then, with shrill trumpeting of fury, planted it squarely on the unfortunate's chest with all the pressure of his four thousand pounds. Blasting madly, the animal started on a run, picked up a hyæna-cage and smashed it, with one blow of his trunk broke the back of a mule, and would have cleared out the show were

it not for a pair of equally huge tuskers that were brought in on a run to butt and prod the crazy one back to his senses.

In the old days, likely, the huge policemen would have been made to rope and throw and tie the mutineer, and he would have been seared with red-hot crowbars and sledge-heads until he "squealed" as a sign of submission—or else died under the torture. But the modern way of handling a bad elephant is to fill him up with opiates. Mandarin's spell yielded to the treatment; but within six months it returned, worse than before. This time a stable-boy who was cleaning the rogue's stall was the victim. Without an instant's warning, the crazy beast sent forth a scalp-raising trumpet-call, like a flash wound his big trunk, raised the lad on high, hurled him to the floor, smashing every bone in his body, ran him through and through with his tusks, and was just kneeling on the lifeless thing when assistance arrived. With elephant-hooks, crowbars, axes, pitchforks, and rhinoceros-hide whips, the beast was beaten off—and never a squeal out of him.

There was a consultation on the spot as to whether elephants should be led forth to strangle the villain. In fact, the noose of cable-rope for the giant throat, and blocks and tackle and elephant-harness, with which the tame beasts were to choke the murderer, were gotten ready. But the circus was on the point of moving to another town and just then had no time to bother with the execution. And thereafter, as if his appetite were appeased by the murderous spree, Mandarin became a model of propriety and earned a respite. As a precaution, however, a four-inch, leather-covered chain was passed around the gigantic barrel, and chains running from this surcingle, between the fore-legs, were connected with the tusks, thus forming a martingale that prevented the free use of the head. Double chains were fastened around the fat hind-legs, and so the rogue stood remorsefully until he was put aboard the *Minneapolis*.

There an intoxicated 'longshoreman, not knowing the character of the dangerous animal, ventured near him, began to tease, and finally entered the big, cratelike cage. The giant simply threw his full weight against the intruder, crushing him instantly. The trumpetings of rage aroused keepers and trainers, and one of the former, a negro, ran with uplifted elephant-hook to bury it into the wicked trunk. Quick as thought, the great, black flail was poised over the man. Down it came with the force of a trip-hammer, knocking him thirty feet, unconscious, across the deck of the vessel, with both shoulder-blades broken—which sealed the doom of Mandarin.

When thirty miles off Sandy Hook, the crazy tusker was killed. Ashore, probably, a bran-mash of cyanide of potassium would have ended the wicked life; or it might have been snuffed out by electrocution, as was that of the bad Coney Island elephant, "Topsy," who dropped like a log when 6,000 volts were sent darting through her system. But on board ship, strangulation by a steam-winch was the easiest method. A ship's cable was bent into a huge noose, which was slipped over the great head, while the donkey-engine began to rattle and clatter, drawing the noose tighter and tighter. Details of the execution are neither necessary nor "nice." The animal died game, without a scream or whisper, holding breath for the enormously long period of two minutes and forty seconds before he went crashing headlong, breaking an eight-by-eight timber as his six tons toppled in a heap. Then the huge cage, weighted with five thousand pounds of old chains and scrap-iron, was raised by derrick and, with a tremendous splash, disappeared into the sea—the last tragic scene in the life of a King of Rogues.

THE CUSTOM OF BRETTINORO.*

By HAMILTON DRUMMOND.†

"AN inn, signor?" said the urchin. "But there is no inn in Brettinoro; I thought all the world knew that! Where does the Signor come from at all?"

"Where the Signor comes from is the Signor's own business; what is of more importance is, where shall the Signor sup and sleep? Dusk is falling, and I have no mind to push on to Polenta. How comes it, boy, that there are no inns in Brettinoro? It looks big enough for a couple, at the least."

As Messer Carlo Villani looked about him from the back of his tired horse, he felt that he did well to be aggrieved. What right had Brettinoro to its long, crooked street and straggle of dirty lanes off that broad market-place he saw before him, if it could not boast at least one inn where a traveller could lay his head? The air of the hills was unhealthy after nightfall—so unhealthy that a man was lucky if the wasting away went no further than his pocket; and before he could reach Polenta it would be black dark. By daylight he had little fear for his purse, which, indeed, was hardly worth the robbing. What his sword had won, his sword could keep; but on a moonless night, and over a strange path that wound under he knew not what tangle of trees, it was different. The clink of his horse-hoofs would be a note of call to every rogue in the forest, and an ignoble stone could make a swift end of Carlo Villani. A lodging of a sort he must have. Then it struck him as sinister that there should be no inn in a place the size of Brettinoro, and he repeated his question with a petulant suspicion.

"How comes it, boy? Tell me the truth now, if there is truth in you."

For answer the lad laughed frankly, gleefully—such a laugh that his white teeth showed in a double row.

"Because of the Custom, signor. I thought the whole world knew of the Custom of Brettinoro?"

"'The Custom of Brettinoro?'" repeated Villani. "What is that? Play me no tricks, you imp!"

"Not I, signor. Come here and I'll show you."

He turned away towards the almost void space of the market-place, and rousing his beast, Villani followed him. All fear of a sinister trap had vanished with the lad's frank merriment; it was too open, too spontaneous to veil a treachery. But he had no mind to be the plaything of an urchin's prank, and so, his riding-switch loose in his hand, he kept within an easy arm's length of his guide.

The market-place of Brettinoro lay four-square, but with the sides longer than the ends. Down the centre stood hollow booths, mere shells of a roof supported on posts, where the folk could find shelter in times of bad weather. Beyond these was the horse-trough, and beyond that a stone pillar some six or eight feet high. By this the lad halted.

"Take your choice, signor," said he, waving his hand upwards in airy introduction, and speaking with another chuckle of glee. "Take your choice, and never again say that Brettinoro is the worse for wanting inns."

Involuntarily Carlo Villani's gaze followed the direction of the gesture. The pillar was a flat slab of grey marble, smooth but uncarved, and with only this thing curious: it was hung with, perhaps, a score of metal rings, each with an inch or two of margin between both top and bottom, and sides. No two were alike, nor, though they have been called rings, were all circular; some were perpendicular ovals, some transverse, some nothing more than pendent bars of metal beaten into a more or less artistic shape.

"Instead of one door, signor, there are twenty open. Take your choice, knock and enter. May the saints give you a soft bed!"

Dropping his reins, Villani suddenly

* "Purgatorio" XIV., 112. Note to Longfellow's translation.

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swooped aside and gripped the grinning lad by the looseness of his coat.

"Did I not tell thee to play me no tricks?" he cried wrathfully. "Who taught thee, imp that thou art, to fling jests in the face of tired travellers? If I had him here, I'd warm his back as I shall thine."

"Signor, signor, there is no jest; Jesu Mary! My lord, hold your hand! 'Tis the Custom of Brettinoro!"

But Carlo Villani was not to be placated.

"The devil take thee and thy Custom! I'll teach thee better manners than to fool strangers."

But while the lad still howled in anticipation of the falling switch, a woman ran across the roadway from an open door.

"What is it, signor? What has Piero done?"

"Piero, as you call him, has played jester, and must take a fool's wages. I asked him: 'Where is the inn of Brettinoro?' and he brought me here. 'Take your choice of twenty,' said he, giggling; but, by my word, he'll find my jest bites sharper than his own."

"Don't strike the lad, signor. If it was told in boy's fashion, it was still the truth. It is the Custom of Brettinoro."

"Custom of seven devils! What do you mean? Are you all mad in Brettinoro?"

"No, signor, sane; and the Custom is this: Of old, there were feuds in Brettinoro, feuds to the death for the honour of entertaining strangers. That meant the strongest always won the day, so Guido del Duca set up this pillar, whereon who wills hangs his knocker or his bridle-ring, and now the stranger chooses his own host."

"Did I not say you were all mad? What? Fight for the right to feed the hungry and house the tired? Whoever heard the like in a Christian country? And now you tell me this fairy-tale!"

"No fairy-tale, signor. Try it."

Loosening his grip of Piero, who promptly removed himself out of arm's length, Villani turned towards the woman.

"Is this truth, mother?"

"True as the saints, signor."

"And if I tie Roland to one of these rings yonder——"

"Make your choice, signor; only I dare not guide you by a hint—that is not permitted. With some you will lie softer and fare better than with others, but with all the welcome is warm, and we have a saying in Brettinoro: 'The welcome is salt to the meat.'"

Carlo Villani edged Roland nearer the pillar until he was within arm's length of the score of rings, and paused, scanning them. There was no sameness in the choice, for no two were alike; all were of iron, but there the identity ended. This was a twisted cable, that the link of a huge chain, here grinned an ape, there a lion roared open-mouthed, and by it hung a serpent devouring its own tail. Some were plain to severity, some fantastic, but nowhere was there a hint of a heraldic device.

Rising in his stirrups, Villani seized one haphazard and beat it vigorously against the marble.

"May we sleep sound, Roland and I!" he said, laughing, for even then he was not sure how far he was the victim of a jest.

"*Heighaye!*" cried Piero, skipping from foot to foot. "Mother of mercy! But it is Matteo Montefeltro's—Matteo Montefeltro's!"

Swiftly the woman turned upon him.

"Hold thy peace, thou and thy Matteo Montefeltro's!" she cried, cuffing him so heartily that he reeled half across the roadway. "It is the Signor's own choosing, and according to the Custom. Stop whimpering, imp, and guide the Signor."

"It seems to me I have chosen amiss," said Villani. "Come now, mistress, what is astray with this Matteo Montefeltro, that the imp should howl so? and can I not better my choice?"

Turning, she pointed across the roadway where, through an open doorway, the red glow of a wood fire flickered.

"If I said: 'Choose again, signor,' *that* would be in my roof by midnight. Bide to-night with Matteo Montefeltro you must, unless you prefer the hillside, or," she added, "unless Montefeltro says 'No' to you."

"No hillside for me," answered Villani; "and it will be a strange thing if this Montefeltro hangs up a knocker that he may say 'No' to the man who uses it. How far is it to this Montefeltro's?"

"Five minutes' trot, signor. Off with thee, Piero, and——" Drawing the boy aside, she stooped and whispered in his ear: "Now begone, and heed what I say."

With a nod, the boy ran off down a side laneway, and it was only when they were out on the open hillside between the vineyards that Villani made up with him.

"What was it she said to thee?" he asked curiously.

Before answering, Piero sidled out of arm's reach.

"Rising in his stirrups, Villani seized one haphazard."

"She bade me remember that a loose tongue often made a sore back, and—— This way, if you please, signor."

Three hundred yards along the hillside he turned abruptly into a bridle-path that wound this way and that with an ever-increasing elevation, until, having crossed an open field, he pointed out where a turret or two rose above the line of the further woods, clear-cut against the olive-grey of the sky.

"Matteo Montefeltro's," said he curtly.

But as he raced back to the roadway, Villani hailed him, holding up a small silver coin between his thumb and finger.

"Take thy fee, boy. I give my word I'll do thee no hurt." Then, as Piero returned, he laid a hand upon his shoulder. "Is it another Custom of Brettinoro to talk of the coming of strangers, and where they lodge?"

"No, signor."

"Take this, then. Tell the dame to hold her tongue; in the morning I'll forget neither thee nor her," and, setting the lad free, he rode on.

Dismounting in front of the door, he drew the reins over his arm and looked round him. By the dim light—the sun was a half-hour gone—the house, part *château*, part keep, appeared half in ruins. The wings were roofless and blackened with fire, a litter of rubble being heaped against the lower courses. Carlo Villani had seen war in his day, had borne his part both as besieger and besieged, and his expert knowledge taught him that the wreckage was under two years old. The handwriting of the seasons made that much plain, nor had there been any attempt to repair the damage. The central portion of the house stood unscathed, but there was no light at the windows nor sound of life within.

Whistling softly to himself, he laid his hand upon the knocker, a counterpart of that fixed upon the marble pillar, and rapped loudly. From the depth of the hollow echo which followed his knocking, it was plain the door, a heavy mass of oak, belted and studded with iron, gave upon a broad hall, but beyond the echo there was no reply. His old ideas of a trick came back to him; but if it were a jest, it was being pushed too far, and again he knocked, this time adding his voice to the din.

"Hallo! Within there! Messer Montefeltro! Open! Open!"

The cry brought out a response. Very gently a six-inch square of the door slid back, and a faint light showed through a net of bars.

"Who knocks, and why?" said a voice, so soft, so sweet, and yet so tremulous, that Carlo Villani's wrath vanished on the instant, and, though he knew he was out of eyeshot, his velvet bonnet was in his hand when he replied.

"A traveller, signorina, and because of the Custom of Brettinoro."

"The Custom!" he heard her whisper, as if speaking to herself. "The Custom! And on this night of all nights!"

Then she went on, more loudly, but with the frightened quaver in her voice he had noticed at the first.

"Oh, not here! not here to-night, signor! It is not safe; indeed, it is not safe."

"If the granting hospitality incommodes you——" he began, lowering his face inquisitively to the barred square.

But she interrupted him.

"No, no; it is not that. It is for your sake, signor, that I beg you to go elsewhere—anywhere but to Matteo Montefeltro's."

Here was what he had asked for in the market-place—a chance to better his choice; but in the perversity of nature, now that his chance had come to him, he would have none of it.

"Carlo Villani is no boor, to thrust himself where he is not wanted," replied he, shifting from side to side in his endeavour to see what lay beyond the bars; but the light dazzled him. "If there is sorrow, or sickness, or death——"

"Sorrow! Ah, yes," said she, "but not death; no, not death—as yet. And perhaps I am wrong—not sorrow, only fear. Oh, signor! go elsewhere, go elsewhere!"

In her earnestness she shifted the light aside, and looking out, their eyes met. All Carlo Villani saw was a fleeting glimpse of a pale, half-shadowed face, and a mouth that seemed to tremble, though that might have been the flickering of the lamp.

"Bid me go as an undesired guest, and I will go," said he; "but for the rest, the Custom is the Custom, and I claim it."

A little silence followed, and through it he was conscious that her mind was measuring him. It was an uncomfortable thought; but while he wondered which of his follies was plainest written on his face to his shaming, he heard her whisper as she had at first—

"Perhaps it is the hand of God—perhaps—perhaps."

Softly the square of wood slipped back into its place, there was a rasp of bolts, a creak of bars, the groaning of a rusty lock, and the door was pushed slowly towards him.

Even in that moment of his high-strung curiosity, Carlo Villani noted as significant that it opened outward.

A yard or two back in the vault of the hall stood a girl. Her features were in shadow, her open left hand intervening between her face and the floating wick she carried in her right; but from her slender build, Villani judged she had as yet scarcely reached womanhood. Beyond her there was an almost blank darkness, grey beams showed overhead in the wind-blown flicker of the rushlight; but, so far as could be seen, the hall was void of furnishings.

"Enter, signor," said she simply, standing aside as she spoke.

The movement flashed the light upon her face, and, feeble as was the glimmer, Villani saw how pale she was, her cheeks ash-white, with dark circles under the troubled eyes.

"But Roland, my horse?"

"Bring him in also. For a year past and more this has been the stable. He will have it to himself to-night. Oh! it is so unfortunate both my brothers are absent."

With one foot across the threshold, Villani paused.

"If you are alone, signorina, I would not intrude myself——"

"No, no, no; it is not that. My grandfather is here. The misfortune is—quite different. I beg you will hasten. It is already past supper-time, and—oh! mother of mercy! signor, let me close the door, let me close the door!"

Though the agony of fear in her voice was not lost upon Villani, he made no comment. Explanations would come later, and he promised himself that before he slept he would know why this sweet-faced child—for she seemed little more—went in such piteous terror of the night. Without a word he entered, Roland following, carefully pawing his way into this unaccustomed place of shadows and hollow echoes; then turning back, Villani drew the door close, bolting, barring, locking it. The jambs, he noted, were of oak, and stouter than a man's thigh; with these and its opening outward, it would be an ill door to force.

"Thanks, signor," said the girl, drawing a long breath. "Wait now while I fetch a lantern, so that you may bed and feed Roland."

Within a minute or two she had returned, and by the stronger light Carlo Villani was able to see his surroundings. He was in a flagged hall, from which all hangings had been stripped. At either side a closed doorway pierced the wall, as if to some further apartment. Facing the entrance a stone staircase fanned out into a passage which disappeared to right and left. The roof was of square, rough-hewn beams crossed by a flooring. There was neither ornament nor decoration anywhere, and except that, at one side, four or five stalls of unplaned timber broke the void, the hall was flat empty.

The girl was quick to notice his comprehensive glance.

"It was not always so, signor; but for this year past, yes."

"Roland is housed like a king, signorina; too well—it will make him proud. Give me twenty minutes, and say where I may offer my thanks to my host?"

"Up the stairway, signor—the door facing the landing. My grandfather is past fourscore, and trusts you will excuse his—his—discourteous welcome. We two are alone to-night, and—and——"

"Tut, tut, signorina! the apologies are mine. In twenty minutes, then, at the stairhead?"

"In twenty minutes, signor, supper will be ready," and with a little curtsy she left him.

For that night Roland had reason to complain of his toilet. Bed and supper were to his liking, but beyond a perfunctory rub or two where the sweat had caked under the saddle-cloth, he went ungroomed. Nor was that from Carlo Villani's lack of time. An old campaigner, he had grown deft at such work, and for half the twenty minutes—his own preparations ended—he stood at Roland's head, watching him munch his corn, but with his thoughts in the room that faced the head of the stairs.

Why was this flowerlike slip of a girl so scared? Why were she and her tottering grandsire alone that night in the wrecked house? How came it that the wreck lay unrepaired, that such a noble hall was degraded to menial purposes? He knew the signs of war when he saw them; here were the effects of war, but as he had ridden along the signs were wanting. No vineyard was ravaged, no blackened roof-trees in Brettinoro told him dumb tales of fire and sack. War in the Romagna differed nothing from war north or south, while here—— But though he heard no sound of a footfall, so softly did she walk, he saw the glow of the rushlight as it rounded the curve of the stairway like a wandering firefly, and was half way to meet her when she called gently, as if afraid of her own voice.

"If you are ready, signor, my grandfather begs that you will join him."

"Quite ready, signorina, but much troubled to be a cause of trouble."

"Have we said so, signor?" Then as he joined her on the stairs, she lowered her voice: "He is not quite himself to-night. Be patient with him, I beg—— Yes, grandfather, we are coming. By what name shall we——?"

"I am Carlo Villani, a poor gentleman of——"

But she did not allow him to finish.

"You are our guest, signor. I am Ghisola Montefeltro"; and—they were on the landing by this time—again she made him a little curtsy. "This is the supper-room, Signor Villani. Grandfather, Signor Carlo Villani has done us the honour to choose our house for a night's lodging, after the Custom of Brettinoro."

Out of a wooden armchair placed midway down the room a gaunt old man pushed himself painfully to his feet. His hair was unshorn in any place, its snowy white a sharp contrast to the pink ruddiness of his lean face. His mouth was thin and cruelly hard, his dull eyes lifeless under their thatch of shaggy brows. As he rose, a huge two-handed sword clattered against his chair, as if in feeble echo of a passionate manhood.

Steadying himself with one hand on the table by which he had been seated, he peered at Villani, his head shaking on his shoulders in the palsy of age.

"You are welcome, signor—more welcome than you think," he began with a cackling laugh. But his mood suddenly soured, and he broke off, pointing forward with a trembling hand. "Your sword. Where—where is your sword?"

"I left it below, signor. At supper-time——"

"Even at supper-time I like to see a man girt as a man. Fetch it. Who knows but there may be a use for it—*Cristo!* who knows? Eh, Ghisola? Fetch it, I say; fetch it."

Groaning, he lowered himself back into his chair, and was still muttering to himself when Villani, with an apologetic gesture to the girl, left the room. It was best to humour him, both for his years' sake and because he was host.

When he returned, the girl was on one knee beside Montefeltro's chair, but half pushed back by the old man's arm. From her attitude, she had been pleading with him, apparently fruitlessly.

"No, no; the truth's the truth," he was saying peevishly. "I see no shame in it, least of all to us. As to Luigi, may he die unshriven, cur that he is! Luigi is beyond shame. But let us have supper first—yes, yes, supper first."

But Ghisola Montefeltro's spirit was stouter than her frame suggested, and she refused to be so easily put down.

"Nothing may come of it, grandfather. Why trouble our guest?"

Montefeltro had already stretched out a hand to grasp a wine-flagon, but he drew it back to answer her.

"That nothingness will come to us all is what I think, and it's not we who trouble our guest. Be you sure, Luigi will not fail to see to that."

"Who, then, is this Signor Luigi?" asked Villani.

Up into Montefeltro's face flushed a storm of rage, and it was between fast-clenched, broken teeth that he snarled out—

"My son, signor, my unworthy son. Now let us eat." Though a direct malediction was wanting, no curse could have been more bitter. Lifting the flagon, he poured out his wine with such a shaking hand that the table was slopped on both sides of the cup, and drank noisily. As he set down the vessel, his lips moved to what Villani could have sworn was a toast of perdition.

It was a very silent meal; his gust of wrath once gone, Montefeltro ate with stolid impassiveness, replying in curt indifference to Villani's well-meant attempts to relieve the constraint. Ghisola talked not at all, and ate as little as she talked. Her duty was service, but even at her busiest it was plain to Carlo that her thoughts were elsewhere. Not that she grew abstracted. It was rather that she was keenly alert, but alert for a something beyond the room. Influenced by his host's reticence, Villani soon relapsed into dumbness, but let it be said that he ate and drank like a hungry man before whom good food is set.

At last Montefeltro pushed back his chair, and with his elbows on his thighs, his hands clasped before him, turned soberly to his guest.

"A strange household, signor, and a strange welcome?"

"I ask no better."

"But there was better yesterday: an open door, lights in the windows, merriment, laughter, wenches and menservants — not many, but enough; whereas to-night——" He paused and for a moment looked sourly

at the girl, as if challenging her interference; then with a sudden stretch of his long arm he drew the two-handed blade from its sheath and planked down the naked steel noisily on the face of the table. "To-night there is

"'Where he bides, I bide. Could I leave him alone?'"

that! Hush, child, and let men speak on men's affairs."

Leaning forward, Carlo Villani tapped the blade with his forefinger.

"For me, signor?"

"Not this, but perhaps its like; and for us all. You do not ask why to-day is not as yesterday?"

"In my place would you have asked?"

Montefeltro nodded his approval.

"No."

"Well, then, I ask nothing but a roof to cover me, meat and drink, which I have had; my thanks, signorina—a bed——"

"Which you are not like to have; no, nor the roof either."

"Grandfather! Is this needful?"

"Yes, child, yes. But the story is a long one. Ask questions, Signor Villani—I give you leave. Only ask briefly, and I shall answer briefly. So shall we shorten the story."

"There will be no offence?"

"None; ask frankly and to the point."

"How came the wings in ruins?"

"My elder son is dead; my younger—whom God curse!—sought to seize the inheritance of his brother's children. You see how he mishandled his father's house."

"Why did you not rebuild?"

"I know Luigi; to rebuild is to be reburned. But all that is long past; come closer to the canker."

"Then your own question: Why is to-day not as yesterday?"

Into the dull eyes a sullen fire leaped, and the hard, flushed face grew harder, redder, as vindictive as Cain seeking his brother's blood.

"Because of cowards—cowards! Because those who have grown up in our house, who have eaten our bread—— Ah! It chokes me, kills me, swells my heart to bursting! Do thou tell him, Ghisola, for I cannot."

"Remember, signorina," said Villani, "it is not really I who ask. Tell me no more than—than—is needful."

"Tell him all," said Montefeltro harshly. The flush, dying away, was leaving his face even older than his years. "Shame or no shame, tell him all."

"When my father died, two years ago, my uncle Luigi—they had quarrelled, signor——"

"Luigi's fault!" broke in Luigi's father. "Turbulent, cruel, cold-hearted—— Go on, girl."

"My uncle Luigi sought to push my two brothers and myself from our right of inheritance."

But she went too slowly to please old Montefeltro.

"Sought! sought! sought!" he cried. "Leave sought, and say rather what he did. Say that he burned his father's house with fire; say that he slew his father's servants in cold blood; say that he threatened—— Oh! that I should be cursed with such a son!

for, say too what is to be done this very night."

"It is true, signor, the wreck is my uncle's doing; and though we beat him back, it cost us three lives. That is why we are alone to-night. They remembered, those who remained, and when they were warned, they fled."

"Warned, signorina, warned of what?"

"That my uncle Luigi——"

"Would complete what he began," broke in Montefeltro. "Now do you understand? This is a wasp's nest, signor. You have eaten, you have drunk; there is still time to escape and follow—the cowards!"

Rising from his seat, Villani bowed stiffly to the girl and then to Montefeltro.

"Signorina, and you, signor, I have the honour to beg the grace of a night's lodging."

"*Cristo!* There are still men in Romagna! But the quarrel is none of yours?"

"Nor do I seek a quarrel; but if a quarrel is thrust upon me—why, then, that is different. Do you invite me to leave the Signorina to her uncle's affection? But you said I understood. Not quite. Your grandsons—where are they, and how were you warned? It is not usual for the wolf to say in advance: 'I go lamb-hunting to-night.'"

"It is this way. My brother Luigi——"

"About whom there is nothing evil but the name," said Montefeltro. "Go on, girl; I will be silent—if I can."

"Has been away these two days, and does not return until to-morrow night. For reasons you will understand, it has been our custom that he and 'Sandro shall not be both absent at the one time; but to-day, at noon, word came that Julia d'Alcomi, who is to be my brother 'Sandro's wife, was at the grave's edge and cried for him. What could the poor lad do but go, though it is seven hours' ride? But within two hours there came a post from Julia which showed it was all a trick. Then—how does such news travel?—our major-domo brought me a heron's plume—my uncle's badge—tied to a scrap of paper, on which was written: 'Remember the eighth of March. You are warned.' So he and all fled."

"The eighth of March?"

"The day Luigi sacked the *casa* and slew 'Tonio and the rest; yes, signor. Now do you understand?"

"Almost, signorina, almost. Two questions more: Why not have fled also?"

"For reasons of nine generations," cried Montefeltro firmly. "If what nine have held is stolen from the tenth, it shall be stolen from before the face of the dead, and not behind the back of the living. We do not come of a runaway breed, Signor Villani!"

"And the Signorina?"

Slipping behind the old man's chair, Ghisola Montefeltro put her arms round his neck, drawing the white head back so that it rested on her bosom.

"Where he bides, I bide. Could I leave him alone?"

"God send us all such love, signorina. One last word: What does Brettinoro say to all this? Will Brettinoro stand aside? Will Brettinoro even hold its peace? Or will it say to the excellent Luigi: 'There's a guest yonder to be reckoned with'? God be thanked that there is!"

"Brettinoro will do nothing; it is not the Custom——"

Carlo Villani rose with a bow that embraced both Montefeltro and the girl in its courtesy.

"I am debtor to the Custom of Brettinoro," said he gravely—"the debtor while my life lasts: understand that, whatever happens. Now, signor, it seems to me the situation is this—check me if I go wrong: Messer Luigi—your brother, signorina, not your admirable uncle—is beyond reach. Messer 'Sandro will not spare his horse. Say he does the seven hours' in six, give him an hour for rest, and—and dalliance; we are but men, signorina—and six hours more for the ride home. It is a race with death, even as he thought the other was; and, again, he will not spare the horse, nor—take my word for it—will he ride alone. That brings us to an hour or two beyond midnight, and—again take my word for it—the worthy uncle knows the time limit of our danger as well as we do. He must attack the *casa*, capture it, slaughter the garrison—your pardon, signorina, but we must look Death in the whites of the eyes to-night, and to speak of him will not whistle him nearer—all before one in the morning, or his plot fails. Am I right, Signor Montefeltro?"

While Villani spoke, studiously flippant for the girl's sake, old Matteo sat forward, his ear caught in his hollowed hand, his eyes once more ablaze with the fore-lust of battle. For this night, life had a smack to the palate it had not had these twenty years. Now he nodded soberly.

"Right, so far. But that leaves Luigi—may God—— No! I will not curse him;

one or other of us must be near his end! That leaves my son four hours?"

"Is it permitted that I command the garrison?"

"Who else?" and Montefeltro laughed disconsolately. Though his blood had warmed, his heart was very bitter at his own helplessness. "I can speak, I can think, I can stand, I can even totter; but for the rest, I am a log."

"Then, signorina, we must go on our rounds. What of this floor?"

"I guarantee the windows; see thou to the doors."

Carlo Villani nodded.

"Come, then, my lieutenant!"

Taking a lamp from the supper-table, he led the way down to the hall, and from his armchair Montefeltro could hear the tramp of his heavy-booted feet on the flags below, the rumble of their echo rising and falling as his inspection took him nearer or further from the stair-shaft. Then came the harsh rasp of wooden benches, settles, cupboards, and the like, dragged from their place to buttress the weak spots, and all the time he sat staring at the open door, his mouth hard set, his hand grasping the wine-cup he never raised to his lips. If at that moment he had had a curse, it would have been for his own weakness, and not for Luigi the traitor.

In less than an hour the two returned, Ghisola leading the way with the lamp. If her face had grown whiter, it was rather from fatigue than added anxiety, for the tense lines about the mouth had relaxed. The danger was little less than it had been. Carlo Villani made no pretence that it was less, but she had tasted the comfort of having a strong nature to lean upon, and thereby the spirit was refreshed. To have to bear the burdens of life alone is the most sorrowful thing in the world.

"All's done that can be done," said Villani; "nor do I think we shall have long waiting to fret my nerve. My plan is this. These lights must go out. If you were alone, as it is supposed you are, you would be retired by now. My horse in the stall will cause no surprise. Messer 'Sandro might have more than one, though it seems he has not. The doors may take care of themselves. At front and back they give into too wide a space for one man to defend. If I understand the worthy Luigi aright, his purpose is not only to break in, but to cast out alive or dead? Good. Then he will make his way upstairs? Again good. At the first half-curl of the spire is our one chance. There the steps narrow, their face is worn by use; and while the lower man—the excellent Luigi—is in full light from the hall, the upper man—your guest and servant, signor—will be in shadow. The saints grant it may not be the emblem of a greater shadow! For the rest——" And Carlo Villani broke off with a little, deprecating gesture. How could he say more? The rest was one man's arm and skill against none knew what or how many. How could that one man say so? Not Carlo Villani.

"But, oh, signor! how can we accept of the service? How can we profit by the sacrifice——?"

"Understand, signorina, I fight for my own life—let there be no doubt of that. Even a cur has so much courage."

"But you could still escape?"

"Then have it that I fight for my own honour."

Matteo Montefeltro had shifted his gaze from the doorway to the other man's face, but except for that he had made no move. Now he spoke.

"Fire?"

"I think not. Signor Luigi will have no mind to destroy his inheritance."

The word set Montefeltro's wrath ablaze.

"His inheritance!" he cried, beating the table with the great sword, his aged face evil to look upon in its senile passion. "Never his! never! *Cristo!* I would send it up in fire myself first. Give him six feet of Montefeltro earth, if you like, but no more," and would have burst out into a whirlwind of vituperation had not Villani stopped him.

"Lights out, signor," said he. "It is time to set the watch. You, signorina, bide here with your grandfather; and when they pass me, take your own course. By that time I shall have resigned command." Nor, though she strove to catch him by the sleeve while she stammered out sorrow and gratitude, would he stay to listen to her.

"Honour and life," said he, blowing out the last lamp, a kind of catch in his voice as if a significance in the act struck him. "The pity of it is, signorina, that I have not the right to add love to complete the trinity dearest to a man's heart," and drawing the door behind him, he left her sobbing; but whether from indifference of age, or because he thought Villani was doing no more than a man's duty, Matteo Montefeltro added no words of thanks.

Descending to the hall, Villani counted the number of steps upward to the curve where he had chosen to make his stand,

went down upon his knees and carefully felt over with his finger-tips the broken flats and angles of the stonework; then, having tested the space available for the swing of his sword between wall and wall, he returned to the upper passage, where the fanning out of the stairhead gave him greater comfort while he waited.

Waited for what? He knew well enough; no illusions were possible, and yet such was his nature, and the nature of the times, that had he foreseen all from the first, he would still have taken the same course. Under the papacy of Boniface the Eighth men held life cheap.

The house was black dark; neither within nor without was there a glimmer of light; and had it not been for the murmur of voices coming through the door, Carlo Villani might as well have been in his grave, so null were the suggestions of life. But these murmurs heartened him. There was sound sense in the risk—it was more than a risk, it was the inevitable—he must face presently. Had their cases been reversed, old Montefeltro would have done as much for him. The fierce, cruel look in his dim eyes was surety for that.

But most of all, it was the girl's white face—so miserable, so afraid, and yet so brave—that stiffened his nerve and warmed his blood when the shadow of that which needs must be chilled it. She was worth fighting for, was Ghisola; and one day, a year or two hence, when he was—gone, some man who kissed her mouth would tell her so and bless his memory.

That was supposing he won through. Supposing he did not, and this excellent Luigi——

But the excellent Luigi himself put a stay on his speculations. Out of the void of the hall, up the blacker blackness of the stairway, rumbled a summons; the clatter of a dagger-hilt pounded heavily against the oaken door, and at the sound Carlo Villani stole softly down to his coign of vantage. Naturally he gave no answer. His part was to play fox and gain what advantage he might from the surprise. Then came a voice, but, by reason of distance and the thickness of the door, the words were lost, and again the dagger-hilt was plied lustily.

But that was not the real attack, and Carlo Villani knew it. Within the time limit the front was impregnable. The weak spot lay behind, and the cunning Luigi had already found it out. With a rasping shriek came the splintering of dried timbers, the groan of a lever-point grinding its way into a slit betwixt a door and its frame, a muffled murmur of voices, with one in authority dominant over all, and again the sound of rending wood. Presently, with a crash, the door gave way; and drawing a deep breath, Carlo Villani stretched himself, not sorry that inaction was almost over. But there was still the piled furniture to be pushed aside, an operation that called for caution. Who could tell what ambush lay behind them?

Though he could not see, Villani could picture the scene: Luigi and his rascals crouching in the splintered doorway, with one, lantern in hand and in terror for his life, peering above the tumbled settles. Through the silence came a crash as a heavy bench was flung backwards on the flags, then another, and another, and another, and again silence, broken only by muttered voices. Not that they cared who heard them, but there's a quality in darkness that subdues the noise of rogues.

How many there were, Villani found it hard to judge, but by the tramp of feet there were five or more. The hammering at the main door had long ceased, and he had no doubt that the two bands were joined in one. Nearer came the tramp, a greyness broke upon the gloom of the stairway, and the crisis grew hot. But Signor Luigi was not the man to take a risk that could be avoided.

"I come in peace!" he cried, halting at the stairfoot; "let all remember that I come in peace! I seek nothing but my own. Surely a son stands nearer to a father than a son's son? I quarrel with no man, but let all within the house remember the eighth of March, and the price Antonio and Giuseppi paid; I say, let all remember."

He spoke slowly, his voice clear and high-pitched, and that it was heard in the room behind him, Carlo Villani did not doubt, for old Montefeltro's chair rasped roughly backwards, and the girl's voice rose in entreaty. For a moment the whole scheme of defence hung in the balance, the plaything of an old man's senile rage; then the entreaty prevailed, and again there was silence.

Luigi Montefeltro broke it.

"We have our answer," said he. "The old fool is in the room above. That is all I wished to know. Take a lamp, two of you, and go up."

"What if—he—he—resists—resents—you understand me, Messer Luigi?"

"He is warned," was the curt reply. "I

"Villani, throwing his point forward, stiffened himself to readiness."

said, 'Let *all* within the house remember Antonio.' Do you, in turn, understand?"

For a second or two the light wavered on the wall as a lamp changed hands; then came the sound of feet on the stone steps, and Villani, throwing his point forward, stiffened himself to readiness. Brighter grew the light, the beams swinging from side to side in the careless advance. There was no alarm, there was not even caution. Round the outer curve swung the lamp, flat against the inner curve leaned Villani, his teeth clenched, his eyes staring, up another step climbed the messenger of a son's peace; forward, downward, lunged Villani, striking without a sound; down, clattering fell the lamp. "*Jesu!*" gasped the rascal and tumbled after it, dead before he reached the level floor. His comrade howled and followed him, three stairs at a stride.

On the instant the hall was in an uproar, voices crying this and that, no man heeding the other. But above the din Luigi Montefeltro's voice boomed out.

"Back, fellows, back! There is a trap—a trap; and by Him who made me, they who set it shall pay for it! Lay Marco by the hall yonder—his day's work is done—and listen, the rest of you——" and the babel died away to a murmur.

"Listen now." Villani knew what that meant—the laying of rascals' heads together, the setting of rascals' wits to work—and braced himself for what should follow. The one thought that troubled him was, had he been wise in risking so little? A bolder front at the first might have laid two by the wall instead of one. Then the light went out, or, perhaps, was whisked into a corner.

It was the sound of heavy breathing told him the attack was imminent. Though their lives hung on their silence, the two stealing up the lower fan of the stairs could not keep the wheeze from their lungs, and Villani made ready. This time all was dark below

him ; but leaning forward, with arm stretched to the full and lowered point, playing slowly from side to side, he waited. Upon that point there came a touch, and he drew his elbow back a foot. Again there came a touch, a brushing of something soft against the moving point ; a cloak, he guessed, and back he leaned upon his heels. He saw the trick—a cloak upon the left arm to draw his lunge, the right hand behind, ready to stab upwards. There would be two abreast, he judged. The bold game was the best. Stepping down with a great shout and clatter of the foot, he thrust right and left, touching he knew not what each time, once heavily and once with a scratch, for a cry and a curse answered him together with a sting in the shoulder. It was not the first of the kind he had received in a stormy life, and the spirit within him groaned though his lips kept silence.

A delay followed, and though time fought on his side, the delay chafed him. For one thing, he grew weaker, and the drip from his finger-tips was a warning. But of a sudden the onset came. There was a scuffle in the hall, a breathing more laboured even than before, a heavy, almost ostentatious step upon the stairs, and again his point touched. This time it was no cloak, and Villani lunged viciously, lunged to feel his blade go silently home, to catch an answering slash upon the ribs, and the attack withdrew. From below there came a burst of laughter, and a "Well fought, Marco!" told him he had been fooled. They had flung the dead man upon his sword, and under his shelter struck home.

The game was almost played, but a thought seized him. Up he fled to the stairhead, as noiselessly a-tiptoe as he could run with speed, and catching up a heavy stool turned again downwards. But he had been overheard. Already they were after him, and where he stood he waited.

"Come on, parricide!" he cried. "Come on, thou slayer of women! thou cur and coward! Come and inherit——"

What Luigi would fall heir to was never said. The contumely turned into a roar of triumph, as the heavy outer door shook under the weight of the blows dealt upon it.

"'Sandro! By the saints, 'Sandro! and all well yet. By the back door, 'Sandro!" he shouted, putting his full strength into the cry. "By the back door! Haste—haste!"

For an instant the knocking checked the advance, but only for an instant.

"Back, two of you, and hold the door!" cried Luigi from the stair-curve. "On, you others, and make an end! I follow you!"

Back flew a scuffle of feet, up with a dash came those below, down flew the stool into the dark, and by the crash and the scream that followed it, found its mark. Out of that same dark loomed a shadow, grey and bulky, forward thrust Villani where he judged the throat to be, struck it full, slipped, and in his fall caught Luigi round the waist. Down they tumbled, rolled a step or two, and stayed, with Villani uppermost. In the fall his sword flew from him, but at such close quarters it was no loss, for, strive how he might, Montefeltro could not shorten his blade to strike. Barehanded, Villani groped for the throat, and through the buzzing of the blood in his ears he was aware of two sounds—one the rasp of steel below, the other the slow tramp of Matteo Montefeltro. Either way help came, but it was abhorrent that a father should slay even such a son ; better the stranger should do it ; and gritting his teeth in his pain he tightened his hold. Louder grew the rasping, nearer came the dragging, shuffling tramp. A light from above shone about them, and by it he could see his enemy's face grow purple in his grip. Then a hand caught him roughly by the bleeding shoulder, and as the tightening grasp flung him headlong down the stairway, old Montefeltro's hard voice cried—

"What, dog! Would you slay my son in the house of his fathers? Ah! Luigi, Luigi! would God that I had died for thee!"

Then Villani fainted, and for that night remembered no more of the Custom of Brettinoro.

A MESSAGE.

BOY: Please, zur, I've just been across to Farmer Yem's, an' 'e says 'e can't give no more nor eight shillin' for pigs o' your size.

SCIENCE FOR ALL.

IT was a Scientific Man,
And long I'd heard him speak
Upon the education plan
Of Latin and of Greek:
But when he spake of Latin verse,
No language, hardly, could be worse.

Then I: "There is a thing or two,
Methought since you began,
Might be unknown, perchance, to you,
O Scientific Man:
These precepts in thy memory see
That thou charácter carefully.

"A cyclone, bred in Saratov,
May here, you'll often find,
Produce a sad disturbance of
The secondary kind;
An anticyclone, moving East,
Is fit for neither man nor beast.

"Umbrellas—or the want of them—
Will upon clear, bright skies,
By the Binomial theorem,
Cause thunderclouds to rise;
But if, what's what, one really wots,
There's nothing like the solar spots.

"They dwell among the solar rays,
In realms of space above—
A system none but savants praise,
And scarcely they can love—
Upon our planet raining thence.
(Their size is said to be immense.)

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

"'Tis never wise, when free from woe,
To phrase your joy in word:
These little things—you never know—
Are strangely overheard;
Though, if you touch a bit of wood,
The issue still may be for good.

"In cards, when once you've drawn three reds,
A run of black prevails:
A coin, that thrice has fallen 'heads,'
Will next time come down 'tails';
Sunshine will cause a fire to wane,
A poker draw it up again.

"Moreover——" But my learned friend
Found that he could not stay,
And must, perforce, to hear the end,
Await some other day:
In sooth, he shut his ears and ran—
A sadder but a wiser man.

C. H. St. L Russell.

BOOKKEEPER: If you are out when Mr. Tremayne comes in to-morrow to order a suit of clothes, what shall I tell him?

TAILOR: How do you know he is coming in?

BOOKKEEPER: He sent three pounds to-day as an instalment on his old account.

MORE TROUBLE.

"How's your wife?"
"Her back troubles her a good deal."
"Lumbago?"
"No, she wants a new sealskin coat."

THE CONSOLATION OF PROPHECY.

FORTUNE-TELLER: You will be very poor until you are thirty-five years of age.

IMPECUNIOUS POET (eagerly): And after that?

FORTUNE-TELLER: You will get used to it.

THE tram was crowded. Nevertheless, a very large foreigner and his wife pushed their way in. A young gentleman—a relic of a fast disappearing civilisation—rose to give the lady his seat. The foreigner promptly flopped himself down into it, to the discomfiture of those on both sides, leaving the lady standing.

"See here, sir," remonstrated the young gentleman, "I got up to give my seat to the lady, not to you."

"Ach! dat's all right. She's my vife!" was the placid response. And he kept the seat.

THERE may be some things a woman doesn't know, but no man can tell her what they are.

WHEN SHE SANG.

SHE sang a song extremely sad,
And everybody wept;
No tone or accent gay or glad
Into her singing crept;
Nobody understood just what
Occasioned all the gloom—
These are the sentences, woe-fraught,
That floated through the room:

Tizzy-la-ha-ha-has tro zuv summah
Le-he-hef plu-u-u minga lo.
Allerluh-huv-huv lickum panyo
Ah-hah-ha fay-ay-ay-ay dedden go.

It may have been a foreign tongue—
The tones were soft and sweet—
But there was none the crowd among
That could the song repeat.
And, Oh, her voice was tremulous
And quavery and low
When dulcetly she sang to us
The words that grieved us so:

No ho flow-ow-ow wuvver kin dreed
No ho ro-ho-hose body snigh
To re see-ee-ee-ee verlass plushis
O haw-haw he-ee-ee erlass i!

I bowed my head upon my hands—
A strong man, too, am I—
Yet every true heart understands
The tears would come, and why.
Here was a lady, passing fair,
Of nature kind and good,
Who told of suffering, somewhere,
And no one understood.

Tizzy la-ha—— **Ah, how tender**
Were the words she dwelt upon!
And the *luh-huv lickum panyo*
That was *fay-ay dedden gone!*

W. D. Nesbit.

HE: Isn't it strange that these opera singers often get something the matter with their voices so they can't be heard?

SHE: Yes, it is strange; the same thing never seems to happen to the people in the boxes.

THE MARCH OF EDUCATION.

GENT (to waiter, who has just dropped a tongue on the floor): Hullo! what's the matter?

WAITER (of classical predilections): Oh, merely a *lapsus linguæ*, sir.

BLIGHTED AMBITION.

OLD LADY: What is your little brother crying like that for?
LITTLE GIRL: 'Cause he's just heard there's no school to-day, and he'd promised his mate to play truant.

A PECULIAR MEMORY.

MY memory's peculiar. It is good enough in spots,
For when it comes to names, why, I remember lots and lots
Of such familiar ones as Jones and Johnson, Smith and Brown,
In fact, I know too many to attempt to jot them down.
But, as I said, my memory's peculiar, for, you see,
Though I remember scores of names, the thing that puzzles me
Is just to try to recollect to whom those names belong,
And nine times out of every ten I'm sure to get them wrong.

Some people can't remember dates. That's not the case with me,
For every year from A.D. one to nineteen-hundred-three
I can recall at any time—the month, and week, and day!
Yes, every date we've ever had is in my mind to stay.
But when it comes to telling what it was that came to pass
On any one of all those dates, then I'm no good, alas!

NIXON WATERMAN.

A DIFFERENCE.

HE: No, I don't see Jones at all now—he has dropped out of our social set.
SHE: He tells quite a different story.
HE: Oh!
SHE: Yes—he claims that he *climbed* out!

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THE RETURN OF "SHE," BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

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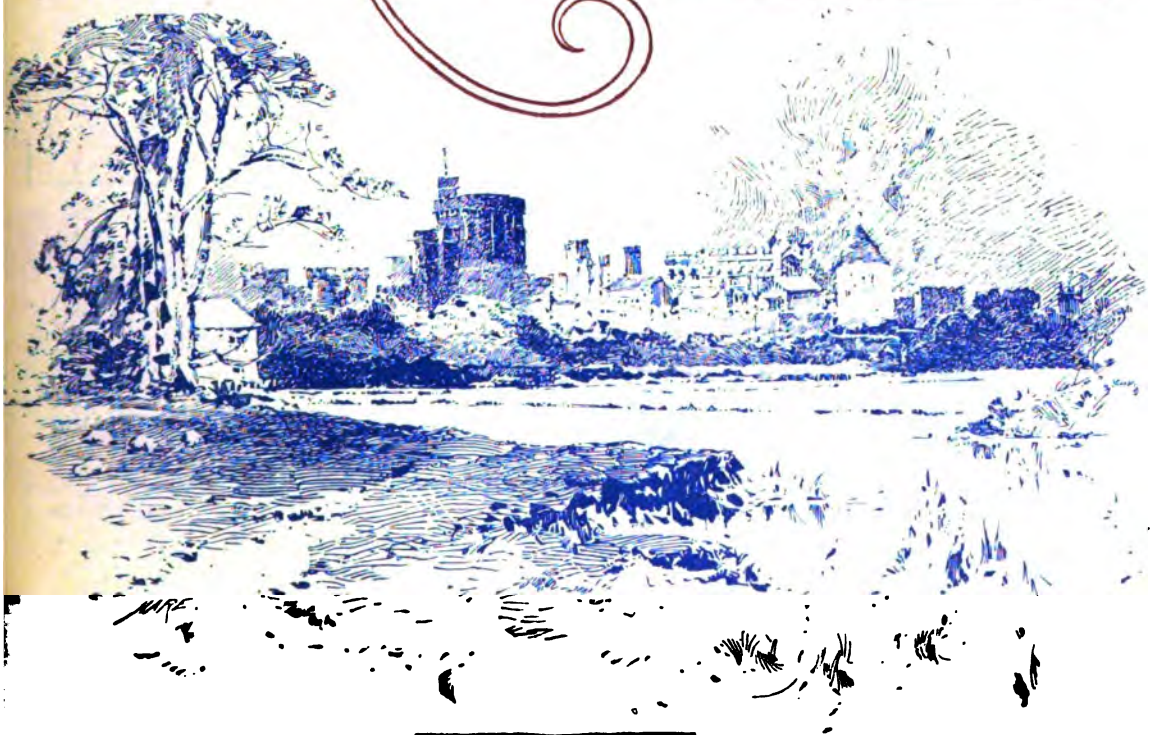
THE

"If Youth But Knew,"
By EGERTON CASTLE.

THE CENSUS.

WINDSOR MAGAZINE



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DRINK AND ITS DANGER

How Habit Forms Disease.

MANY people drink too much. They suffer daily in loss of health, loss of capacity, and loss of self-respect.

They get less and less of the pleasures of life; more and more of its sorrows.

And they get worse.

The day a man says: "I must have just one drop of whiskey to nerve me for this or that duty," he is in danger.

The moment the nerves cry for stimulant at any given hour of the day, the moderate drinker has gone too far.

No healthy nervous system craves for drink.

At best, one becomes an immoderate moderate drinker, always taking a little too much—always not quite well—always losing against the man whose mind is free from drink.

At worst, one becomes—but look round among your friends.

You know how often the skeleton of drink rattles in most unlikely cupboards. You know of

1. Broken lives.
2. Characters lost.
3. Ideal home life destroyed.
4. Hideous private brutalities and degradation.
5. Madness—fitful and temporary.
6. Insanity, suicide, and last—death.

The hideous calamity of drink excess does not come at once—it grows steadily on what it feeds.

It is not sufficient for the excessive drinker to say "No."

He may eat out his soul in sober repentance in the morning, and be in the last stages of alcoholic collapse at night.

He has no will.

Every drink-wronged nerve cries against reform.

It is a disease, and the sufferer needs help.

The Keeley Cure gives just this help. It cures the terrible and unreasoning lust for drink. It gives:

1. Will.
2. Self-respect.
3. Physical Strength.

It takes away the compelling crave as surely as a deft surgeon removes a decaying limb.

If you have friends on the brink of ruin—investigate.

The Rev. Canon Fleming and a public Committee of well-known temperance workers have watched the Keeley Cure for twelve years. They publicly endorse it.

Do not accept our statements.

Ask for proof. Insist on knowing

1. What the Keeley Cure is.
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3. Who are the men who vouch for it.

Remember three important points—the Keeley Treatment is true; it takes about one month; every patient is free throughout the whole time.

Ask us to prove what is said here.

Let us show you how we have restored ruined lives to usefulness and responsibility;

How the life in which you are interested may be saved.

Evidence and the result of public investigation by the Rev. Canon Fleming, B.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to the King, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Lord Braye, Mr. W. Hind Smith, and other public workers, post free. Write, mentioning *Windsor*—

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By W. Wontner.

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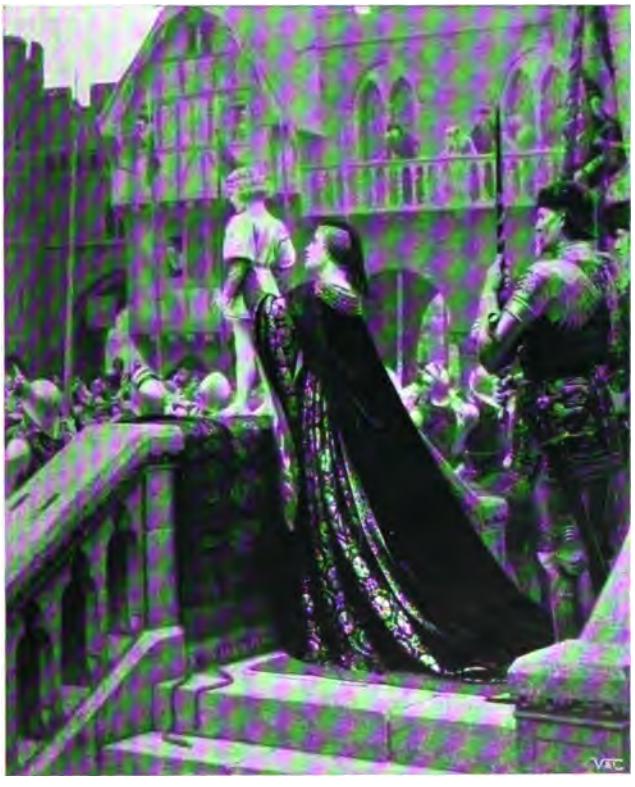
MARCH 8, 1935

THE ART OF MR. E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

THOSE who believe in the hereditary transmission of talent have a brilliant case made to their hand in the person of Mr. Blair Leighton, who has painted some of the most popular pictures of our time. His father, Charles Blair Leighton, was an artist—a very talented artist—who exhibited several works during his short career, for he died when he was only thirty-two years of age.

Mr. Blair Leighton's case is, therefore, uncomplicated by any question of environment or example, factors which have often served to obscure the real action of the hereditary principle by introducing important outside considerations, for everyone knows how often boys, either imbued with a desire to follow in their father's footsteps, or because if they do so their path in life will be smoothed, will adopt the paternal profession and succeed in it.



"VOX POPULI." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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Mr. Blair Leighton was only two when his father died, but at a very early age he gave unmistakable proof of his bias towards art. Recognising the terribly precarious nature of the calling, not only his mother but all his family was exceedingly averse to his making art his life-work. They decided on a mercantile career for him. Accordingly, when he was little more than fifteen, he was put into the office of a firm of tea merchants in the City. The artistic impulse in his heart and in his brain, however, refused to be denied. He spent the whole of his spare time in drawing, and had made such progress that when he was seventeen he resolved to devote his evenings after business hours to the study of art. He therefore entered himself as a student in the evening class at South Kensington. Even thus early in his career he discovered for himself the fact he has often formulated in the words: "Drawing is the backbone of the whole thing." After a term or two of drawing from the flat, he decided to try another school, where methods were less tedious, and accordingly joined Heatherley's school in Newman Street, where he worked from the antique at first, and later from the life.

He had only been at the school a short time when he received his first lesson in the real spirit of art. The model was a very pretty little boy, and taken with the child's face, Mr. Leighton resolved to finish that part of his study as well as he could. When the model was sitting for the last time, Mr.

Heatherley went into the studio to criticise the students' work. He looked over Mr. Leighton's shoulder. "You've got that head too small," he said.

"I am sorry," Mr. Blair Leighton answered, "but I am afraid I can't alter it now."

"Why?" asked Mr. Heatherley. "Have you no indiarubber?"

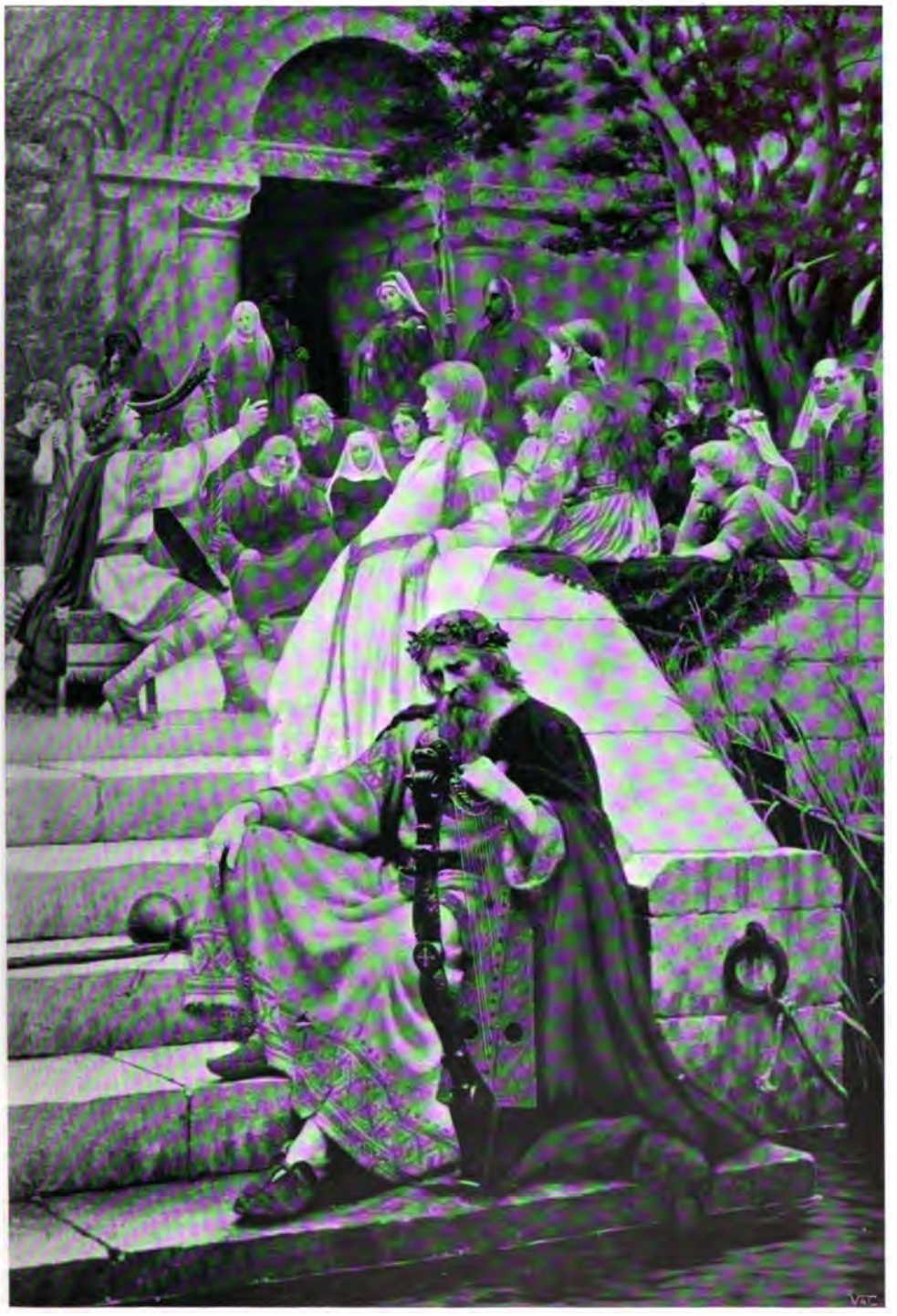
"Oh, yes," returned the student, "I have indiarubber, but I am afraid it is too late; the model will be going in another hour."

Mr. Heatherley looked at him a moment. "In art it is never too late to alter your work if it is wrong," he said quietly, and he moved on to the next easel.

On another occasion the model was a girl with charming colouring. The student tried hard to reproduce it on his canvas, but the difficulties were very great, almost insurmountable for a beginner. "Ah!" said Mr. Heatherley, "don't you wish you could squeeze it straight out of the tube?" Mr. Blair Leighton has often since wished that he could squeeze such colours "straight out of the tube."

Over and over again during his career Mr. Blair Leighton has thought of the former remark, and, thinking, has acted on it. A notable instance occurred in the case of "God Speed!" Mr. Leighton's contribution to the Academy of 1900, one of his most notable and successful pictures. It was practically finished. In two hours more the van was to call for it to take it to Burlington House. As he went into the studio something in the picture dissatisfied him, and he thought he could improve it. "In art it is never too late to alter your work if it is wrong," were the words that flashed through his mind. He got a sheet of glass, put it over the canvas, and rapidly painted in the alteration that had occurred to him. He stepped away from the canvas and

"THE END OF THE SONG." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.



"FADED LAURELS." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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considered the alteration. The next moment the sheet of glass was removed, he had a razor in his hand, and was scraping out work which had taken him fully a week to do. Within two hours the required change was made, and in a perilously wet condition the painting was sent off to the Royal Academy.

At Heatherley's, the sight of other men devoting not a part, but the whole, of their time and energy to the pursuit of the calling he loved best in all the world, fanned his desire to do likewise. Once again he discussed the question in the family circle. Finally he yielded to the persuasion of an uncle to go on as he was going until he came of age, and if, then, he was still in the same mind, no further opposition would be made to the carrying out of his wishes. With such a prospect before him, Mr. Blair Leighton began to work with renewed ardour. He was soon sufficiently advanced to go into the painting class at Heatherley's, and then he went out sketching on his own account. One of the partners in the firm with which he was associated was somewhat of an art patron himself. Not unnaturally, he became interested in the *employé* whose tastes ran in the same direction as his own. One day he

"THE ACCOLADE." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

"GOD SPEED!" BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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asked young Blair Leighton to show him some of his work. Not only did he select a sketch and pay him liberally for it, but he advised the lad not to relax his efforts in his endeavour to be an artist. Such encouragement, coming from so unexpected a quarter, naturally produced an effect. On the day Mr. Leighton was twenty-one he announced his resolution to his family, gave a quarter's notice to his employers, and made up his mind that, cost what it might, he would be a painter. To that end he had been saving all he could out of his salary, and managed to put by enough to give him a good year's start. The first thing to do was clear. He resolved to get into the Royal Academy Schools. He therefore went to the British Museum, did the necessary drawings as examples of his skill, and was soon admitted as a student. There was a remarkably rich gathering of talent in the Academy School just then, for among Mr. Blair Leighton's

"A SUMMER SHOWER." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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"THE QUESTION." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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contemporaries were Mr. George Clausen, Mr. S. Melton Fisher, Mr. Stanhope Forbes, Mr. Arthur Hacker, Mr. La Thangue, Mr. A. S. Cope, Mr. W. Hatherell, and Mr. Solomon J. Solomon, all of whom have names to conjure with in the artistic movement of to-day.

Mr. Blair Leighton soon went through the antique school, and got into the preliminary life class, in which the students are allowed to draw from the nude, though they were not then allowed to paint from it until they reached the upper life class. In the "preliminary life," Mr. Blair Leighton took

the premium for the best life study done during the year. The achievement was more than ordinarily pleasant, for just then his funds were beginning to run short, and he was being confronted with the problem how to make money to continue his education. He accordingly took the drawing-room of a small house and resolved to earn what he could by black-and-white work. At once success attended him. He was engaged by Messrs. Cassell to work for their magazine, as well as their "Book of British Ballads," which they were on the point of bringing out, and on other publications. All the day was given to this em-

"ELAINE." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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"IN TIME OF PERIL." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

From the picture in the McKelvie Gallery, Auckland.

"A FAVOUR." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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"AN APPOINTMENT." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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"THE SECRET." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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ployment, and all the evening to the life classes at the Academy. At first it was only the minor work which was entrusted to the young artist, but very soon the better class was given to him, and his illustrations were paid for at comparatively high prices. The reason for his rapid success was perhaps to be found in the fact that he treated each drawing as if it were a picture, not only paying models to sit to him, but even going to the expense of hiring the right costumes, just as he would to-day when engaged on important pictures. It was undoubtedly the right policy, for it gave experience which could probably not have been obtained in any other way.

It was only about eighteen months after he had entered the Royal Academy Schools that Mr. Blair Leighton sent his first picture to the Royal Academy Exhibition. It was painted in the little studio in which he did his black-and-white work, and he called it "A Flaw in the Title." It was hung in a good position on the line, and attracted a considerable amount of attention, not only from the public, but from the art critics as well. How unlike the work of an inexperienced hand it was may be j from the fact that the critic of the *St* of that time expressed the hope th artist would not be demoralised by elected a Member of the Academy too but would be kept waiting for a time had done some more good work. As words were printed in 1877, it is e that the jest, that when a man becom Academician he ceases to do good wo to-day, something of a "chestnut."

Further to fill his cup with joy at t time, before the Academy closed "The F in the Title" was sold for £200, a which has probably been seldom reached not often exceeded by a first picture.

In the same year in which his first pic was exhibited, Mr. Blair Leighton tried the gold medal of the Royal Academy, lost it, it is said, by a single vote to Mr. Thangue. He never tried again, for with the exhibition of his first picture his life-work had begun in real earnest.

From that time Mr. Blair Leighton formulated a scheme of activity, from which he has never departed. For about six months in the year he devotes himself to one im-

portant canvas for the Royal Academy, and the other months he spends on smaller subjects which, if less important artistically, are by no means less popular with the public or with the publishers, through whom the artist is now able to make his appeal to the picture-loving population of the world.

It was not long after he had begun exhibiting before Mr. Blair Leighton found that it was impossible for him to keep on black-and-white drawing, and to do all the painting he desired. One or other had to be neglected, and, although it meant giving up a practical certainty for an uncertainty, there was no hesitation in his resolve to choose the higher and more permanent form of art, for illustration, however well paid it may be, is of necessity ephemeral. True, the decision was not so risky as it might otherwise have been, for he had been selling his pictures to various buyers who saw them at the exhibitions in London, and he had also obtained commissions for others. Still, there was no steady demand for his work, which, even at that time, did not exceed five or six pictures a year. That limited output was further handicapped by the fact that his versatile mind refused to be bound down to one style, and he was constantly changing his class of subject, his manner, and, from a certain point of view, his *technique*. Evidence of this was furnished by his second picture representing a young girl walking down the aisle of a country church and leaning on the arm of an elderly bridegroom. With mordant sarcasm, Mr. Blair Leighton had sent it into the Academy with the title "L.S.D." In deference, however, to the representations of certain older artists, he changed the name to "Till Death Us Do Part." The picture has another interest, for it is the only canvas of modern life which Mr. Leighton has ever painted.

While working at this picture, Mr. Blair Leighton and some artist friends were out one evening. Returning home by tram, their conversation turned on their work, and it was conducted in an essentially

"LADY GODIVA." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.
Reproduced from the original in the Leeds Art Gallery, by permission of the Directors.

"RIBBONS AND LACES." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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"A FLAW IN THE TITLE." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.
The Artist's first picture in the Royal Academy, now in the collection of Holloway College, Virginia Water.

"shoppy" way. One of his comrades, a great friend, now one of the most brilliant members of the Royal Academy, turned to him and said rather loudly: "Whom have you got for your bride?"

Mr. Blair Leighton mentioned the girl's

"WAITING FOR THE COACH." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.
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name. Instantly everyone in the tram became interested.

"Is she pretty?" asked the other.

"Beautiful!" replied Mr. Blair Leighton.

"Fair or dark?"

"Dark hair and fine eyes," he replied.

"I wonder how she would do for me?" exclaimed his comrade, and there was consternation in that tram.

The modern subject was followed by "The Death of Copernicus," and each year has seen other pictures added without a break in continuity to the list of his works which are recorded in the catalogues of the Royal Academy.

"THE HEIRESS." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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Of his earlier work, probably the most successful was "The Secret," which remains, with "The Accolade," and, in some respects, "Launched in Life," one of the pictures Mr. Leighton himself likes best. "The Secret" was painted some nineteen or twenty years ago, and it has a distinct personal

"MARKET DAY." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

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"1816." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

Reproduced by permission of Franz Hanfstaengl, London and Munich, publishers of the large plate.

interest for the artist. Just about the time he was getting ready to begin his picture for the next Academy, one of his uncles went to see him. Naturally he asked what the new picture was going to be. He was shown the rough sketch, and said he did not care for the subject. "Why don't you paint the picture of the 'Death-bed Confession,' the sketch of which you showed me some time ago?" he asked.

"Because I can't afford to run the risk of its not finding a purchaser just now, and this is more likely to sell," replied Mr. Blair Leighton.

"Well, if I give you a commission, will you paint the 'Confession' for me?"

"With pleasure," replied Mr. Blair Leighton. The terms were agreed upon. The picture was finished and sent to the Academy. It was well hung and well thought of. There were applications from would-be purchasers to the artist to know if it was for sale. Feeling that the letters showed the picture had a market value, he wrote to his uncle and told him about them.

The uncle entered into negotiations with one dealer and sold him the picture for exactly twice as much as he had paid for it. The transaction was completed two or three days before Mr. Blair Leighton's wedding. Instead of keeping the difference between the price for which he had sold the picture and that for which he had bought it, the uncle handed over the whole amount to his nephew.

Photo by [*P. G. Luck.*

MR. BLAIR LEIGHTON IN HIS STUDIO.

Few artists can, in the nature of things, have painted a wider range of subjects. The reason is that, as a rule, it is not only the story or incident of the picture with which Mr. Blair Leighton starts, but a scheme of colour or of light and shade, or, more rarely, a special arrangement of the figures, the grouping of which has interested him. In other words, the germ of his work is an artistic impulse, and the story a secondary consideration to make it appeal to the onlooker. Not that Mr. Blair Leighton despises stories; even to suggest such a thing would be to go to the antipodes of truth, for he believes in incident in a picture, and considers that, the work being equal, it adds a further interest to a canvas, except in the case of those rare masterpieces which have the supreme gift of beauty in themselves.

Having decided on his arrangement, Mr. Blair Leighton's next care is to choose some incident or theme which will demonstrate it. Often this is obtained by reading, and it has long been his habit to keep a notebook in which he enters ideas and incidents which come to him from reading or observation as lending themselves to pictorial treatment. Thus his well-known picture, "The Accolade," derived its inspiration from a French work on chivalry, which mentioned that even ladies occasionally conferred the order of knighthood on worthy men. "Elaine," on the other hand, was the outcome of a desire to paint a brilliantly lighted group relieved by the grey masonry and sombre gloom of an old water-gate. "God Speed!" is an example of the picture which owes its origin to the wish to paint a certain arrangement of figures and background, and the artistic impulse which produced "1816" began merely with a group on a balcony in mid-air who had to be given something to be interested in, that something being forthcoming in the happy thought of the Scots Greys returning home the year after they had fought at Waterloo. Popular and universally admired as "Elaine" has been, it furnishes another instance of the

"MARGARET, DAUPHINE OF FRANCE, FINDING THE POET ALAIN CHARTIER ASLEEP, KISSED HIS LIPS FOR THE SAKE OF THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS THEY HAD SAID." BY E. BLAIR LEIGHTON.

Reproduced by permission of the Autotype Company, New Oxford Street, W., publishers of the large plate.

often recorded fact that artists are rarely satisfied with their work when it is completed. Indeed, Mr. Blair Leighton is quite in accord with a brother artist who once sorrowfully remarked: "I spend my time in beginning beautiful pictures and finishing very bad ones."

Although when he once starts work he never leaves the picture until it is finished, the idea of a subject may remain in his mind for several years before it is brought from the nebulous realm of the imagination into the world of actuality. Thus "Alain Chartier," the picture by which he was represented in the Academy a couple of seasons ago, was actually sketched out the same year as "The Secret," and would have been painted then but for the happy chance already mentioned which enabled him to carry out the more dramatic picture.

As soon as he has decided on his subject, Mr. Blair Leighton makes firstly some sketches of the design in black-and-white and then others in colour. These latter are very simple, and so slight that they do not take more than some two or three hours to complete. These preliminaries over, work is begun on the canvas itself, and is carried through without any adventitious aid in the shape of a smaller canvas on which experiments of new groupings and arrangements may be tried. In this, Mr. Blair Leighton's method resembles that of Mr. Orchardson. Over and over, young artists have gone for advice to the famous Academician.

"Don't you think," they have said, "if we were to alter the arrangement in this, that, or the other way, we should improve the picture?"

"You may or you may not," has been his invariable reply, "but you won't be painting the same picture you are now," and he has always ended by advising that the original design should be finished, and the new one painted later, if necessary. Firm in this belief, Mr. Blair Leighton has, nevertheless, never hesitated to scrape out weeks of work if he has thought that by doing so he could improve the painting. One sufficiently explanatory reason for this is to be found in the fact that quality of painting is one of the factors in *technique* which most fascinates and pleases the artist. It is, no doubt, this which has caused certain charges of undue or over-elaboration to be brought against Mr. Blair Leighton's work. Perhaps a physical cause is at the bottom of this elaboration. Mr. Leighton's sight is very good, and his endeavour has always been to represent Nature faithfully and thoroughly as he sees it. "If I saw things as some people paint them," he has been heard to say more than once, "I should go at once and have my eyes tested." Many men, in his opinion, cease working long before they have completed their pictures, for to finish and subordinate parts in relation to the whole is one of the most difficult things in painting. It is a sore tax to the patience, for it means that the conscientious painter has to spend a great deal of his time in the elaboration of details which many people do not even notice at all, although these details produce that delightful sense of completeness which appeals forcibly to those who have an appreciation of thoroughness — a perception, by the way, which artists are apt to deny to many so-called critics who write glibly enough about works of art, and mete out blame with a lavish hand, ignoring the high qualities which many seriously executed pictures undoubtedly possess.

The conscientiousness of Mr. Blair Leighton's drawing has been universally acknowledged, even by those who assert it stops short at conscientiousness, and does not challenge comparison with the great names in art. Mr. Blair Leighton has, by his own admission, both jeopardised his success and at times defeated his ends by too great an anxiety for achieving completeness and thoroughness of detail, for art is an eternal discard, and to know what to omit is as important as to know what to put in. In his brush work, too, his method is often at variance with that of many who are now fashionable, who paint the whole of a picture *au premier coup*. Brilliant as is the result obtained by this means, there is a danger of monotony of execution, and a careful consideration of any of Mr. Blair Leighton's later works will show that he aims at getting as much variety of texture as possible on his canvas by different handling of the colours. This inevitably means a certain loss of spontaneity; but to gain one quality another must be sacrificed, and the painter has to make up his mind which is, to him, the most desirable to obtain. It is this fact which tends to make criticism, real criticism, very difficult, for the critic should see what is in the painter's mind, what are his exact aims, and should sympathetically view the whole subject from his standpoint, before it is possible for him to say whether the artist has succeeded or failed in producing a given result; for in art there are many standpoints, and who is to say which is the true, right, and lasting one?

IF YOUTH BUT KNEW.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

V.—THE KING'S MAIL.

BETTY, the little Austrian wife of the Burgrave of Wellenshausen — Chancellor to His Majesty King Jerome I. of Westphalia—had charming capacities for mischief; but they were sadly undeveloped. Shut up for the three years of her married life by her grossly jealous husband in an inaccessible Burg, amid the hills of Thuringia, small chance had she had indeed. The single opportunity which had presented itself—that of separating her husband's niece, Sidonia, from her hour-old bridegroom—she had conscientiously availed herself of. The young man had had the audacity to admire Betty herself first, or so Betty had chosen to think; he was, therefore, distinctly not to be trusted, and must, moreover, be punished. Morals demanded it. But the business had been a mere trifle, accomplished with disappointing ease. Betty, in her consciousness of power, yearned for wider scope; and now, at last, she had attained it.

The Burgrave's very jealousy had delivered him into his wife's hands. From tyrant he was become slave. Betty was mistress, not only of herself, but of the situation.

And therefore it was that she was actually in Cassel — Cassel, the gay, irresponsible capital of the gay, irresponsible Jerome—Cassel, the Mecca of her dreams! And not only was she in Cassel, but she had got rid of her Bluebeard. For what pleasure could a poor little woman expect, I ask you, with the shadow of a huge, jealous husband perpetually between her and the sunshine of the most innocent flirtation? Away with Bluebeard to his Chancellor apartments at the Palace! Lady Bluebeard preferred the hotel, if you please, and her liberty.

How the monster roared! Yet she had him at her mercy, and for fear of greater scandal he was fain to submit. As for Sidonia, the new Countess Waldorf-Kilmansegg (who should not long bear that title if the Burgavine could help it), Betty consented to keep her by her side. The girl made an excellent chaperon; and the sight of the minx's proud, silent sorrow was not altogether disagreeable to her aunt by marriage.

So Betty was in Cassel and Betty was free: a butterfly in a garden, the long summer's day before her, and all the flowers of spring to choose from! And what a charming man was King Jerome! Not a hint of the sort of savage they said those Corsicans all were, much less of the plebeian, about him. A real little king, after Betty's own heart. She had always had a conviction that they would understand each other. Burgravine Betty had occasion, very soon, to write to this affable sovereign a most delicate little note on pink paper.

It was posted by Mademoiselle Elisa, who might well stare at the superscription, and promise herself that if her lady had such correspondence, the Burgrave's *Jaeger* would certainly no longer suffice the maid.

There was also, be it said, a trifle of a note to the Burgrave posted at the same occasion. It had cost Countess Betty but a single dash of her pen.

* * * * *

The spirits of spring and autumn are akin, although the one wanders to the fulness of life, and the other to the cold sleep, death. Across the dividing months they seem to meet each other, in grace and pathos, in caprice and gentleness. They serve you smiles and tears, skies of a tenderness unknown to summer, huge gales of wind, soft as milk, mighty as love—winds that come chanting with the voices of the ocean, the mountain, and the forest; great songs of glory, that seize you by the way, in resistless arms, and tell you wondrous things, and set your blood leaping as they pass: set, if autumn it be, the yellow leaves awhirl in a death dance; or, if spring, every baby bud rocking on its sappy spray.

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Two travellers, one riding, the other afoot, went side by side along the high imperial road from Goettingen towards Cassel. There was a mighty spring wind which blew into their faces. To the rider, who was young, it spoke mightily of the spring in his blood—spoke spring things of love and budding secrets. The breath of it in his nostrils was full of a scent of growth and yearning that maddened him: for he had fever in his veins and he was baulked in love.

But to the other traveller, whose hair was already grey, who tramped along at the swing of him who has learned to ignore fatigue, an autumn lament was hidden in the April joy. It told him how all that is born must die, and how the beautiful die first. In the whisper of each infant leaf he heard the coming sigh of inevitable fall; in the fragrance of the striving earth he could smell the bitter graves of yester-year.

The horseman was clothed in fine and fashionable garments, as became a high-born traveller; he who trudged was but a vagrant player, who made music for his daily bread, and rarely knew in the morning where he would lay his head at night. The hazard of the road had thrown these two strangely together; and Hans, the vagrant, had fiddled joy and sorrow, love and hate into the life of Steven Lee, Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg, almost, it seemed, at his fantastic pleasure. But Steven loved his mad companion. Though peaceful travellers both, they had recently been caught in the whirl of a Cossack raid—for in the death-throes of Napoleon's empire, even Westphalia was shaken—and at the risk of his own life, the Austrian patrician had saved the vagabond from a wanton spear; and, with all the reasonless generosity of youth, he loved him now all the more for the burning of his own wound.

They went in silence. Steven's heart was heavy: he had been robbed of his bride well-nigh on the altar-steps, and was now seeking her, in an impatience which repeated disappointment had fed to frenzy. And Fiddle-Hans was his guide: he had long ceased even to wonder at his own blind confidence in this being of mysterious influence.

At a certain spot the forest began to press upon the imperial road. The overarching boughs flung premature night upon them; and, as the whispered protection of the woodland enfolded them, they drew closer together and their tongues were loosened. It seemed as if Nature had drawn them into a green chamber of confidence which made for speech, even as the desert plain for silence. The rider struck his saddle-bow with a passionate hand, at which the plodding grey faintly started.

"To think of her, at Cassel, under the devil flicker of that imperial puppet's glance! Sidonia, my wife, at the Court of Jerome——!"

The countenance of Fiddle-Hans, safely shadowed, was wrinkled by a grin of satisfaction.

"A waterlily may defy the ooze," he observed sententiously.

But the simile was hateful to the youth—a waterlily, a flower that flourishes, in atrocious beauty, upon the very slime! Then he cursed his wound for its slow healing and his blood for its ill-timed fever, and the length of the road, and the perversity of women.

"And the wrong-headedness of young men!" added the musician drily. But thereafter, in tones of consolation, for dudgeon still reigned on the saddle above him, he pointed to a light far off through the dark flicker of leaf and shadowy march of trees:

"See, yonder shall we sup and sleep; and thence, rested, start in the brisk dawn. And to-morrow——"

"To-morrow!" interrupted the bridegroom impatiently. "No, I shall be in Cassel to-night."

"You forget the times we live in, comrade," came the fiddler's answer. "Our beloved monarch has made a fortress of his capital—breastworks and glacis where of old the orchards and cottage gardens; posterns and *corps de garde* at all road entrances. And everything closed at the setting of the watch, an hour after sundown! No, friend, we enter Cassel to-morrow."

With the ardour that brooks no delay, Steven the lover had, in his mind's eye, seen his pilgrimage ended before the fall of the day, seen himself dashed or crowned. Crowned! Upon the latter vision, how the surge would rise in his heart, till he well-nigh swooned from it!

Fiddle-Hans, with his diabolic insight, chose this moment to draw from his fiddle sudden strains of melting sweetness.

"Have done!" panted the bridegroom. "I cannot bear it." And the player fell silent, musing upon the ways of men and women and of love. Let a bride but elude her lover's embrace, what surer road shall she find to his ardour?

* * * * *

"Two travellers, one riding, the other afoot, went side by side along the high imperial road.

Night had fallen, and a full moon was floating up the sky, when the comrades emerged from the woodland and halted before the doorstep of the inn.

"The Three Ways" held, it seemed, merry company on that April night, judging by the medley of shout and song that rang out from its upper windows.

The fiddler, mounting up the steps that led to the door, gave a few knocks with special emphasis. To this there was no response. Laughing silently, he waited awhile, hearkening; then suddenly betook himself to his violin, at its highest pitch. Too much engrossed with their own music, the first-floor revellers paid no heed to knocks or notes; but below there were immediate stirrings; the bolts screeched under a hasty hand.

"*Ach!* you, Geigel-Onkel!" cried the hostess, as she stood revealed on the threshold. "You will have your joke! We thought it was the police commissary's rap! Ah, Heavens! what times these are! One's heart is in one's throat all day, all night."

She clasped her hands upon her flat bosom, but suddenly catching sight of the rider, forgot to pant that she might the better stare.

"'Tis but a new brother of mine," said the fiddler carelessly. "Send the *Kerl* for his horse. So you have some of the boys here? Well, I bring news for them! Come, comrade, you must be weary."

In the kitchen, amid otherwise pleasing surroundings, their sense of smell was offended by an extraordinary reek of stale wine, presently traceable, it seemed, to a postilion in dilapidated uniform, who was ensconced within the glow of the hearth.

The man's high collar and braided jacket were open for the freer intercourse of throat and can; he winked impudently at Fiddle-Hans, and had a truculent roll of the eyes for Steven.

"Interception of the King's mail—*lèse majesté*—crime of the first category—punishment capital," observed he, with some pride, in answer to the young man's astonished look.

"The punishment includes all accessory to the act," suggested Fiddle-Hans pleasantly.

"Not the victim of coercion," stated the postilion with serene indifference.

He turned his tankard upside down as a hint to the hostess. She, poor thing, seemed to regard these doings as a hare may the trap that clutches her pad.

"The gentlemen are upstairs," she said, and wiped the dampness from her lip with the corner of her apron.

The gentlemen upstairs now began again to make their presence uproariously patent.

"The Brotherhood are apparently having a little argument," quoth Fiddle-Hans, with a slight smile.

"For Heaven's sake go up and quiet them, if you can! We shall have the gendarmes!" groaned the hostess.

"Now, comrade," said the fiddler to Steven, one foot upon the narrow stairs, "I will now introduce you into nobler company than ever. I have made you known to the newest King and the oldest Burgrave in the world. To-night you shall become acquaint with the offspring of a nation in chains—heroes, my little Count, no less. Patriots of the first water!"

Count Kilmansegg was conscious that the corners of his high-born lips drooped. The patriotism of this Westphalia, the convulsions of this tin kettle on a mere corner of the vast Napoleonic fire—the pot-house heroes that roared their enthusiasm into the night to the clink of the can——!

There was a twinkle in the musician's eye that seemed to mock his words. He went nimbly up the stair, and his companion followed with the heavy foot of indifference.

A drunken shout greeted the entrance of Fiddle-Hans. Steven stood on the threshold, his disdainful lip curling into ever more open scorn at the sight with greeted them:—three dishevelled youths, in different humours of intoxication, extravagantly costumed according to the taste of the militant *Studiosus:* tunics of velvet, shabby but much-befrogged; jack-boots; gigantic spurs that had, probably, never pressed horse's sides; poetically open collars; uncut hair; tobacco-pouch and rapier on belt; china pipes, six feet long, tasselled with Fatherland colours. A squat individual, exuberantly bearded, sprawled at the head of the table, expostulating with vehemence; he was embracing a can of wine, and defending it with drawn spadroon against the other two, who—the one with uproarious laughter, the other with tipsy solemnity—were making futile attempts to wrest it from his possession. The table was strewn with letters and papers.

No sooner did the hirsute *Bursch* perceive Fiddle-Hans that he abandoned both sword and can, and staggering to his feet, opened wide his arms.

"Welcome, brother — master — friend!" exclaimed he dithyrambically.

"*Salve!*" then cried the laughing student, pounced upon the abandoned can and, neglecting the glass at his elbow, buried his impertinent, sandy face in its depths. Whereupon the melancholy third, whose long, black hair fell about a cadaverous countenance, sank into his chair.

"*Vilis est hominis natura*——" lamented he; then suddenly broke into the vernacular and shook his fist at the drinker: "Thou rag!"

"*Salve, fratres!*" said the fiddler, by no means surprised, it seemed, at his reception, but neatly avoiding the threatened embrace. "How beautiful it is," he went on, "to see the saviours of their country at work upon her interests, even when the rest of the world sleeps!" and he pointed to the letters as he spoke.

An inflamed but exceedingly alert eye was here fixed upon Steven over the rim of the can.

"*Prudentia!*" cried the drinker, flung down the vessel and ran forward—"A stranger among us!"

With a bellow the bearded one lurched for his weapon:

"A stranger? . . . *Pax intrantibus!*"

The weeper profited of the excitement to seize, in his turn, upon the abandoned vessel.

"Nay," said Fiddle-Hans, arresting the double onslaught with outstretched arms. "*Pax intrantibus* be it—we are friends!"

Steven stood in the doorway, sneering. In his ill temper he would have found a pungent satisfaction in laying flat the drunken couple—and no doubt, with the science cultivated in Jackson's London rooms, would, despite his wound, easily have accomplished the thought. He made a movement forward. But the fiddler held him at arm's length; held him still more, it seemed, by that strange authority he exercised no less over King Jerome's rebels than over King Jerome himself.

"Peace, brother Peter—peace, most learned doctor *in herbâ*. I bring a friend, I say, a new brother, my comrade, a noble Austrian who, by the way, is half an Englishman, and thus as bitter a foe to the tyrant as your most Germanic selves. I introduce:—Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg — Herr Paul Oster, 'Mossy-head,' *emeritus* swordsman, *Senior*

of the Great Westphalic conspiracy. Behold, Count, the true German garb, the type of manly beauty! Behold this Barbarossa head! Behold the sword, in short (if I may so express myself), of a great patriotic movement. And here," turning, with a fresh gesture of ceremony, "we have the brain, the tongue, the acute eye: in other words, Herr Theophilus Schmeeling, legal doctor, a jurist fresh from all his honours at Goettingen—and the third. . .?" He looked interrogation at the black-haired student, who was slowly discussing the remains of the wine. The jurist, surprisingly alive to the situation, here answered briskly for his melancholy comrade, who was still absorbed and absorbing:

"Johannis Stempel, Sanctæ Theologiæ Studiosus. The moral guide, we may say, of our movement. An 'Ancient House,' also a faithful heart—a good labourer in the vineyard—but," he added, chuckling, "apt to be *weinerisch im Wein*, whiny over the wine."

He perpetrated his atrocious quip with a wink of little red eyes.

Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg found some pleasure in bowing three times with ironical ceremony. But Fiddle-Hans took up the tale again with a dry disregard of any possibility of humour.

"Here we are, in the heart of a great conspiracy, and not one of us but risks his head by so much as merely looking on! The Sword, the Law, the Church. 'Tis a conspiracy well headed!"

As he waved his hand, Steven's eyes were directed towards the table, and he realised that the papers lying in such disorder were the contents of the mail-bag that hung on the theologian's chair. His thoughts went back to the dilapidated courier downstairs: "Crime of the first category," had said that official.

"Bah!" cried the Jurist, "Jerome does not kill; he but fleeces his little flock, as all the world knows."

"Your pardon, doctor," retorted the fiddler, with a fine incisiveness in his tone. "The most paternal government makes an example now and again. And the head of one Carl Schill is now affixed, minus its body, on the toll-gate of Helmstadt. But reassure yourselves, the odious French invention of Dr. Guillotin has not yet superseded your old Germanic square-sword; your heads would be hacked off in the heroic style. Immense consolation!"

"Augh!" cried Barbarossa, and sank into his seat at the head of the table, clasping his middle, as if a sober sickness had fallen upon him with these tidings. His very beard seemed to turn pale. But presently it flamed again with a revulsion of anger:

"What the hangman! How is one to manage these fools? They sit and soak and sop and suck, and enough to twist twenty necks on the table before them. I told them so, just now, when I wished to put the wine away."

"The can is empty," here intoned the theologic *Studiosus*, after the manner of one giving out a psalm. "*Nunc est bibendum—Aut bibe aut abi!*"

The Senior growled like a dog in his beard, but the Jurist intervened. "Content ye," he said softly. "I'll to the letters, and here's a cool head will help me. Will you not, Geigel-Hans—good Geigel-Hans? And we shall but crack a bottle between us, just to clear our brains. Shall we not, musician of my heart?"

"Yes; *aut bibe aut abi—sauf oder lauf*—drink or slink," asserted the Divine afresh.

"*Doctorlein*," said the musician suavely, "I am with you. And the devil's own head you must have," he pursued, looking at the Jurist with a kind of admiration; "for I'll be sworn you've drunk as much as the other two put together—but I pray you, a word first. Wherefore the King's mail?"

"Your request is reasonable," responded the other in fuddled verbosity. "*Providus, homo sagax* . . . The defendant's request is allowable, worthy Senior.—Are you defendant, by the way, or pursuer?"

"Accomplice," said the fiddler quietly, sitting down and gathering a sheaf of letters into his hand. "To the point again, brother: why the King's mail?"

"A batch of warrants out against the Brotherhood. And here," the student slapped his greasy tunic, "you behold equity contravening judgments: legal sagacity tripping up edicts; the true principle—for if your lawyer is not the antidote to the law, what is he? Answer me that! Ah, here comes the wine! No more cans, but bottles. Our landlady knows how to treat gentlemen. Nay, nay, *Pastorlein*, get you to sleep again and dream of your first sermon. There is work to be accomplished here. Mrs. Hostess, give him small-beer in the can—he will never know the difference!"

Fiddle-Hans, who had rapidly sorted the letters in his hand, raised his eyes and cast a look about him. The Senior, sunk in a heap upon his chair, was staring straight before him with a glowering eye, and evidently in the first stage of drunken stupefaction.

The aspirant Divine was whimpering over the strangely inferior taste of his tipple. Steven, leaning against the whitewashed walls with folded arms, stood looking upon the scene, weary, arrogant, detached.

"Hey, Sir Count," said the fiddler then, with one of his rare sweet smiles, "what say you—a glass of wine? No? Why, then, what will your lordship do while we manipulate affairs of State . . . in this *Cabinet Noir?*"

For the life of him Steven could never display haughtiness to his strange companion, however dubious might seem his proceedings. Too much he knew of him by this time, yet too little.

"Nay," said he, giving him back a faint smile. "I see a couch yonder. I will try a sleep, till the State of Westphalia is secured —or undone—for I am woefully tired."

"The couch? Right," said the fiddler, nodding. "Yes, go to sleep, comrade, and dream. Here with that heap, brother conspirer. And now, listen: the wise commit no unnecessary crimes. We have no business with the private correspondence of the good folks of Cassel. But here is a document with an official seal, and addressed to the Commissary of Police, Goettingen."

He tossed the letter across the table. There was a shout of triumph from the Jurist.

* * * * *

The couch was clean enough, and Steven had flung himself on it with a whole-souled desire to shut out a sordid, unsatisfactory world. But sleep, the jade, is not to be had for the asking. The maudlin whines of the Theologian, the stertorous breathing of Barbarossa, the Jurist's ceaseless flow of language, the crackling of the papers, the fiddler's very mutism, were all so many goads to drive him into ever more feverish wakefulness. Against the hard hair bolster his heart-beats resounded ever stronger in his ear. "Sidonia, Sidonia!" they said, in maddening persistence. And then, as in a sort of vision, he would see the Don Juan, King Jerome, with his flickering eyes, and start with a spasm of anger to a glaring consciousness of the mean room, the guttering lights, the sickening reek of wine and smoke, the insufferable company.

"Hey—Herr Jurist, halt, halt!" came the fiddler's voice suddenly. "Leave that letter alone. That is, beyond any doubt, a private letter."

"Nay, 'tis addressed to the Arch-Enemy, and no correspondence with tyrants is private. Besides," with a grin, "it's one of those new-fashioned French envelopes, and the wafer has come unsealed in my very hand. The wise man—hic—neglects no hint of Providence. *Hey da!* what have we here? O thou little son of Venus, what a sweet slip of rosy paper! what a darling little claw of a hand! . . . . . (The King has a fine taste in doves. . . . I'll grant him that!) Bah, Sardanapalus! It is enough to turn any man republican. I am for the rights of man. Tyrants shall have no monopoly of dovecotes. Hum! neither date nor place: a cautious dove! Chirp, chirp!" The creature pressed the sheet to his tipsy lips with disgusting lushness. "Would I held the darling here! Hark! what does she say?—'*Sir*' (A cold beginning: her feathers seem ruffled!),—'*I ought to be very angry with you; but, alas! anger is not to be commanded any more than love. How well it would be for us women were it otherwise!*' (Pretty dear! Ambiguous as a lawyer's statement!) '*Yet I feel that you must be forgiven, if but for the sake of duty—for I should be indeed disloyal to persist in rebellion against my lawful lord.—Betty!*' (O Betty, I thought better of you! Tamed so suddenly?) '*P.S.*' (Aha! now we shall come to the true meaning, to the kernel, *medulla, medululla esculenta*, of the rosy note.)—'*Understand: I promise nothing. But understand also you are forgiven. You may come and receive your pardon—if no more!*'"

The reader's mouth was opened upon a fresh flood of dithyrambics, when the fiddler's voice rose with sudden peremptoriness: "Pass me that letter!"

There fell a silence between the two. Fiddle-Hans, his lean jaws propped upon his hands, sat staring at the pink sheet. The lawyer fell upon a fresh pile of letters with monkeylike mischief and activity. The Senior, supposed director of this *Cabinet Noir*, snored lustily. Its religious guide and philosopher was still pondering over the perversity of his liquor.

"Ha!" cried the Jurist, with a sudden shout, "another missive from the pink dove —same hand, same paper and cover, and addressed to no less a person than the great Chancellor Wellenshausen! Never draw such angry brows upon me, *Minnesinger* mine. I tell you, this woman positively cannot seal a letter!"

Steven lifted his head from the pillow. He heard the rustle of the opening sheet in the student's hands; then came another crow:

"'How beautiful it is to see the saviours of their country at work upon her interests!'"

"Excellent, upon my *cerevies*, excellent! Listen, man. Whatever your faults are, you can laugh.

"'*Hôtel de l'Aigle Impérial.*

NEVER!

Betty, Burgravine of Wellenshausen.'

"Thunder! 'tis his wife! It is a whole story *à la Kotzebue*. Do you hear, Fiddler-Hans? 'Tis his wife. 'Never!' she writes to him. Oh, the dove has claws and beak, and she can peck!"

Fiddle-Hans, without betraying any of the exuberant mirth expected from him, leaned over and, with neat decision, plucked the letter from the other's hands. And as the Jurist stared, wavering confusedly upon offence: "Go on with your work, friend," said the musician, smiling. "That second warrant has not yet been discovered. The night is waning. It may be well to be fairly on your road to Goettingen before the hue and cry——"

* * * * *

Steven, whose mind had become keenly on the alert at the first mention of Betty's name, had turned again on his hard couch with a general relaxation of mind and body. As soon as the student's indiscretion had made him master of the Burgravine's address, and of the consoling fact that she and Sidonia—for where the Burgravine was, surely also was Sidonia—were not at the Palace, and that it was Betty—frivolous, pretty Betty—who was the prey marked down by the wanton eye of Jerome—there had come a kind of relief. He must have fallen into slumber, for he was suddenly back in the old Burg of Wellenshausen, with Sidonia, his little bride. She was sitting in the high-backed chair, in all her wedding finery, even as he had last seen her. But she was smiling

upon him. . . . "Uncle has given me your letter. It was all a mistake, a great mistake," she was saying to him. Then, as he sprang forward to take her in his arms, suddenly, with the fantastic horror of dreams, her face changed, became red, distorted, even as the face of the vinous student who was violating the secrecy of private letters. Her voice changed, too; grew raucous, broken with insupportable laughter. "You never loved me," it said; "that is now clear to me. You meant well with me, I know; but it is not right—such a marriage as ours cannot be right, either before God or man. Had I understood before, I should have died rather than consent. But it is not yet too late. Our marriage is no marriage. I have taken advice, and very soon we may both be free. No—I will not see you. I will never see you again."

Steven sat up straight, and even at that moment there was an uproar. Fiddle-Hans, creeping round the table like a cat, had fallen silently upon the student, and was paralysing, with a grasp of steel, the hand that held the letter.

The Jurist bellowed as if the executioner were already upon him, and "Mossy-Head," waking up, shouted "Treachery!" while, as the clamour had given the finishing touch to his unstability, the Theologian, clutching the once more empty can, fell, a sodden heap on the floor. The Senior flung his drunken bulk blindly against the fiddler; Steven, in his turn, leaped from the couch.

Even with one hand (his left arm was still in a sling) anything so intoxicated was easily disposed of. He picked the Sword of the conspiracy off Fiddle-Hans, who thereupon, finding himself free to deal with the Jurist, possessed himself at once of the letter. His thin cheeks were faintly touched with scarlet, and his fine nostrils worked with quick breathing; otherwise he seemed unmoved. Steven, therefore, was all the more astonished to hear him exclaim with utmost disgust—utmost scorn and anger:

"*Palsambleu!* but I am weary of this! Drunken, sottish swine! Out with them to some sty! Roll your fellow out, Count, and down the stairs. If your shoulder smarts, you have sound legs at least . . . and riding-boots!"

The wine, which had seemed so long merely to stimulate him, here suddenly took melting effect upon the student of law. He twisted in the fiddler's grasp, flung both his arms round his neck, and embracing him with the ejaculation: "O thou dear, ancient one!" showed an instant inclination to slumber on his shoulder.

"Pah!" cried Fiddle-Hans, and disengaged himself with what seemed to Steven surprising vindictiveness. He then trundled his man into the passage. The door of an empty bedroom, flooded with moonlight, stood suggestively open; here he cast the creature from him, and threw sword and scabbard and pipe on top of the grunting body.

Steven, in perfect gravity, followed his friend's example; but, with more mercy, he cast his burden on the billows of the feather bed.

"There is yet another," quoth the fiddler, dusting his hands. He also, it seemed, failed to see humour in the situation. Disgust was upon him. He was Fiddle-Hans no longer, but a *grand seigneur* with a vengeance, offended in all his Versailles refinement. He led Steven back into the room. "We shall have to carry the hog. Take you his feet, while I his greasy poll."

The Theologian had not even a grunt. They laid him beside the Jurist in the moonlight—with a certain effect of symmetry, like fish on a slab.

Fiddle-Hans locked the door on the outside and pocketed the key. A second, then he and Steven stood together in the darkness of the landing. Except for the snores from within the room, and similar sounds rising from below, the inn of "The Three Ways" was wrapped in stillness.

"That is the courier, I take it," said the wanderer. "Did I not say, my noble friend, that I would bring you into the company of heroes? Listen to it. Thus do we conspire in Westphalia!"

When they re-entered the room, the musician went instantly to the window, and, opening it wide, stood inhaling in deep draughts the clean breath of the woods. It was then that stillest, most mysterious hour of the whole circle—the hour before dawn. The night sky held a strange depth of blue against the garish yellow lamplight within; the stars were paling. With head thrown back, the vagabond stood gazing upwards. There were moods of his strange comrade that Steven had learned to respect. He therefore neither spoke nor approached; but, after completing the purification of the room by the simple process of turning out all the cans and bottles, he sat down and waited, absorbed in his own painful reflections. At last Fiddle-Hans gave a heavy sigh and, leaving the window open, sat

down facing his companion. The contents of the rifled mail-bag lay between them.

The musician's face looked pale and weary and severe. Still in silence he began to toss such packets as had escaped violation back into the bag.

"Will you give me my letter, please?" said Steven dully. Then his youth and hot blood betrayed him into a bitter cry: "O, I am miserable!"

The older man glanced at him from under his eyebrows. It was an odd thing—for what was he, after all, but a poor, half-crazed, broken gentleman?—yet there was a certain smile of this Fiddle-Hans which made the world seem warm to the rich and high-born Steven Lee, Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg.

"He had the great bag on his back."

"O blessed unhappiness of youth!" cried the musician in his old manner, half mocking, half passionate. "Did you but know it, these pangs, these sighs will be sweeter to the memory of your old age than your youth's most satisfied ecstasies! Here is your letter boy. Go, weep and rage upon it, if you will, with all the fury of your checked aspiration. . . . What! you open your arms, and she is not ready forthwith to fall into them! You condescend to run after her, and she does not instantly stand still to be caught! You thought that to-morrow's sun would see you with your bride in your embrace, and behold! you have still to woo her! Bewail your hard fate, you are indeed to be pitied!"

"Would you not like your fiddle?" cried Steven, as he caught the half-folded sheet that the musician tossed towards him, "that you may set my folly to a tune? When you want to sermonise, I had rather you did it on the strings, if you don't mind."

For a second, Fiddle-Hans seemed about to resent the pettish speech as an impertinence. A frown gathered; but, with a short laugh, broken by another deep sigh, he resumed his air of sad serenity:

"Nay," said he, stroking the strings of the instrument that Steven was pushing towards him, and then laying his hand flat upon them to still the wailing sound, "did I make music to-night, it would not be music for your youth, but that of hopeless sorrow. Fool!" said Fiddle-Hans, fixing his mad, brilliant eyes upon Steven, "is she not alive, she whom you love? and you prate to me—to me, of unhappiness!"

Though the words were harsh, his tone was strangely gentle. Had Steven dared, he would have put out his hand to touch the speaker. But he did not dare, and it was well.

The wind rustled through the trees; there came a stir and a murmur from the woods; the purple, blue depth of the sky quivered with pallid changes.

"It is the dawn," said the fiddler in a worn voice. "Get you to that couch again,

for you must sleep, and we have a day of action before us. Aye, take that letter with you and lay it under your cheek. If it seems cruel, have not her fingers touched it? Ah! if you but knew from what a wounded heart, perhaps, sprang those reproachful words! Why, if she has pride, man, will she not be the fitter mate for you? And if she will have naught of a loveless marriage, is it not because she would have love? Poor little Sidonia . . . who only yesterday was a child! You have made a woman of her; see that you know how to meet her woman's measure."

Steven stood by the couch, palpitating to the words, to the golden visions they opened before his fevered eyes. . . . Sidonia, the child, with her yellow plaits of hair, and her eyes brown and green, clear, yet deep, like the brook under the trees. . . . Sidonia, whose lips he had once, only once, kissed; who had smiled at him under her bridal veil. . . .

Fiddle-Hans had said he would make no music; but it was the music of the gods his words had evoked for Steven in the dawn. Presently the older man looked up from his dreary abstraction. Steven, stretched on the sofa in all the abandonment of young fatigue, was sleeping like a child; his beautiful young face, upturned towards the dawn, was smiling. The watcher's set features relaxed into tenderness.

"*O bella Gioventú . . . !*" he murmured. Then he looked down at the scattered sheets before him, and his lips twisted in bitter mockery. Here had been a night's work of petty crime under the fine-sounding title of patriotism and national conspiracy. But, now, might not some good be brought out of it, after all? How sound the fellow slept! Not that he, the wanderer, envied any sleeper but him that would never wake. Well, to work!

He took up, with contemptuous fingers, Burgravine Betty's easy lines of surrender to the royal Don Juan. It was clear that she was vastly flattered at the thought of becoming one of the *mil e tre*. But Butterfly Betty had a husband. . . .! Yes, the butterfly should be saved, if it were only for the sake of the pure child who had, as yet, no better shelter than those fluttering, gaudy wings.

He re-read the letter destined to Jerome, and smiled. Then he turned over the other sheet with his forefinger. The pregnant "Never!" sprang again at him out of the page, in Betty's delicate flourish.

The fiddler smiled again.

* * * * *

Through the open window a level shaft of light struck the sleeper's forehead. Fiddle-Hans rose to draw the wooden shutter. But Steven frowned and awoke.

Without, the forest was one green song. It was spring's busiest day: such chirping and fluttering and matings, such pushing of blades and buds, such strivings of sappy shoots, such buzzings of new-winged flights, such flurry and scurry of soft-furred things were going on in those dappled glades!

It seemed shame to be sullenly sleepy on such a morning. Steven breathed the bright air sharply, and his ill-humour vanished.

"That is well," said Fiddle-Hans, as if the young man had spoken. "Nature sets us the example; what work she has to do, she does happily. Be brisk, comrade; we have also a task before us, and an immediate. The mail-bag is ready. We must now start the courier again on his interrupted duty. Heaven knows in what state we shall find the clown! We shall probably have to pump on him! . . . Then, to Cassel."

Melodious snores were yet intercrossing each other, in finer rhythm than ever, in the locked bedroom as they passed down the stairs. But the postilion was awake, although he still lay full length on the bench, with face upturned to the rafters, staring stupidly at a bunch of herbs immediately above him, with an eye totally devoid of speculation.

Early as it was, the thrifty household was already astir. A fire was crackling pleasantly in the huge hearth, and a fresh sound of water running came from an inner room. The host of "The Three Ways" stood in the wide-open house-door looking into the empty road. He turned quickly at the sound of their steps and grinned in jovial greeting as he saw Fiddle-Hans.

"Good morning, Mr. Host," said the musician. "Fine doings have you had here the night!"

"Students' tricks, students' tricks," said the host, suddenly uncomfortable, and slouching back into the kitchen as he spoke. His small eyes blinked furtively away from the sight of the mail-bag, which Fiddle-Hans now heaved on the table. "Bah!" pursued he, "I knew nothing! I busy not my head over gentry's doings or students' pranks. I go to sleep. They concern me not." Then he burst into a

"He held the letter at arm's length."

forced chuckle. "Popped him into a wine-cask, they did, in the back yard of the 'Bunch of Grapes,' up in Cassel, where the fellow takes his nip before going his round. And they sat on the cask, the three of them, singing and smoking their pipes, as they drove past, with the French soldiers who looked on and laughed, out of the town gates, with not a finger lifted to stop them. 'Pon my soul, it was a fine joke! The cart's out yonder, and the cask, too!" he added, and chucked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the sunlit yard, shaking the while with a laugh that might have struck the observer as a trifle forced.

"Your jokers are still enjoying the sleep of a blameless conscience," said Fiddle-Hans. "They lie in your best bedroom, Mr. Landlord. I locked them in, lest your good wine should lead their innocence and light-heartedness into new jokes .... that might be less excellent." He took the key from his pocket and tossed it on the table. "Release the birds when you think fit," he added.

The landlord took up the key with some alacrity. Fiddle-Hans remained a while musingly fixing the outstretched form of the postilion; then a faint laugh shook him.

"In a wine cask," commented he. "A right old German jest, not without its gross humour ....! He did suggest they had kidnapped him: the creature actually spoke truth!"

Mine host almost perpetrated a wink, but checked himself and merely coughed. "O, these students!" he reiterated vaguely.

"No wonder the beast smells like a bottle-brush," cried Steven suddenly, curling his fine nose. Here, then, was the explanation of that stench of stale wine which had sickened him in the close room the night before, and which, even now, the sweeping fresh breeze could scarcely conquer.

"The High-Born has perfect reason," cried the innkeeper; "for the rascal is sopped, within and without. If you squeezed him, he would run vinegar. Well, so long as I am paid——" was the philosophic parenthesis. "But the wife has shaken him in vain. There he lies, and it were perhaps as wholesome he should jog." His eye moved uneasily towards the mail-bag. "And what is to be done with that?" it seemed to ask.

"Quite so," said Fiddle-Hans gravely. "Has he not his letters to deliver? They will be one post late; but in Cassel, nowadays, no one is so mighty particular. He must be freshened up, I think. Here, Mr. Landlord, I and my comrade will bring him to the trough, and you shall do the pumping. We'd better off with his jacket first, comrade. Never look so doubtful, Mr. Landlord. If His Majesty hears of it, you may be decorated. Think of that!"

"Saints forbid!" said the host, turning pale, and sketching a cross on his vast apron-bib. "If Jerome heard of it, I might be shot."

"Nay," said Fiddle-Hans cheerfully, "you may take my word for it: the hours are counted within which there will be either decorations or executions in the name of Jerome. But, meanwhile, to our duty! Never look so disgusted, little comrade. This is a vile beast, as you said; but in a minute we shall have him purified."

* * * * *

It was, indeed, a purified courier, a chastened and subdued mail-bearer, who trotted his way back to Cassel, astride that self-same horse that had dragged him forth in his reeking prison the night before. He had the great bag on his back (undiminished save for two warrants and one private missive — one, indeed, that had already reached its proper destination), a gold piece in his pocket, and a plausible tale of violence and rescue to tell, should it be required of him.

* * * * *

In the best bedchamber of the *Aigle Impérial* at Cassel, the Burgravine Betty von Wellenshausen awoke, and looked out upon her surroundings with a sleepy smile of complacency.

She yawned and stretched herself deliciously. It was good to wake in Cassel and hear the bustle of life about her, the ceaseless movement of the inn courtyard, the horn of postilions, the clattering chariots, the gay French voices of the guardsmen calling for their morning coffee, the distant joyousness of military music on the breeze, instead of the rarefied loneliness of her Wellenshausen dungeon up on the crags, where the morning might find her higher than the clouds themselves, and with perhaps scarce the beat of a bird's wing about the awful stillness of her mist-enveloped turret.

Yes, it was *du dernier agréable* in this gay Cassel—Betty's thoughts ran naturally to French—to wake up to the prospect of a day that was likely to hold the most new and

diverting experience. . . . Positively Jerome was a charming fellow.

It was perhaps a trifle strong to ask for a secret rendezvous on the strength of one meeting; but Betty did not regret her answer. Without being at all prepared to yield—gracious powers, was one not to enjoy oneself a little? . . . . after three years of Wellenshausen!

In the midst of these gossamer resolves, the door creaked apart.

The Burgravine rubbed her eyes and thought she must be still dreaming, for in the aperture peered the heavy countenance, the bald head of her husband—yes, actually the Burgrave of Wellenshausen himself!

She sat up, her lace cap awry upon the starting dark curls, her cherry mouth open, her eyes round and staring, the very image of astonished indignation. With ponderous tip-toe tread, not unlike that of a wild boar stepping out of covert, the husband entered the room. He closed the door behind him and stood smiling, half timidly, half fatuously. Betty's clenched hands flew up in the air and down again on the sheets.

"How dare you!" she gasped. "Did I not forbid you——?"

"Oh, come now, Betty, my little wife, my little dove, I've startled you. You were asleep, angel? But when I got your dear little letter——"

"My . . . . my dear little letter?" Betty shrieked, eyes rounder, curls more startled than ever. She sat rigid. He had bombarded her with abject appeals, positive bellows on paper; but Betty's reply had been firm—very firm.

"My dear little letter?" she repeated under her breath once more. Then, as she recalled the missive in question, she was shaken with an irresistible giggle. Her face dimpled all over. The Burgrave, gazing on her amorously, thought her the most ravishing, the most maddening of beings ever created for the delight or torment of man.

"Your letter, my Betty, of this morning," he murmured, drew a pink sheet scored with delicate writing, from his breast pocket, and carried it to his lips. "What wonder that, upon receipt of this, I could not delay coming to my sweet Betty a minute longer!" He held the letter at arm's length. "Your wifely, your dutiful words: 'I should indeed be disloyal to persist in rebellion against my lawful lord.'"

Now, at a flash, the situation was laid clear before her:—by some inconceivable carelessness she had put her correspondence of two nights ago in the wrong covers. . . . A plague on this new-fangled French invention of envelopes!

She shut her gaping lips with a snap, and swallowed down the cry that rose to them. Rapidly she tried to recall that elegant little epistle which had given her so much satisfaction; and then all other feelings were lost in a gush of gratitude to the Providence that had suggested those delicately ambiguous terms which saved the situation—saved Betty, Burgravine of Wellenshausen, from irreparable disgrace.

She turned and smiled adorably on the Burgrave.

"Monster!" she cooed, "do you deserve forgiveness?"

* * * * *

There was brilliant sunshine as Steven rode in at the gates of Cassel. The fiddler tramped beside him. But once within the town, he halted, waved his hand, and called out:

"Good-bye."

"How?" cried Steven, drawing rein, his heart suddenly sinking at this unexpected parting.

"Ah, little bridegroom!" said Fiddle-Hans, "it is even so. And a pretty figure," he said, "should I be, to shadow your lordship's magnificence in this gay Cassel!"

Nevertheless, he stepped across the cobbles, laid his hand on the horse's neck, and looked up at the young man; all mockery was fled out of his tired, kind eyes.

"You are an honest lad," he whispered, "and you love her—go, tell her the naked truth."

* * * * *

At the Imperial Eagle, Sidonia, in her little gable-room, sat alone according to her wont. She had told her false bridegroom (for had not Aunt Betty irrefutably demonstrated that he had dared to marry her without love, out of pity?) that she would never see him again, that her marriage was no marriage.

And yet, as she sat, she held her wedding-ring close to her finger, as though she loved it. And ever she watched the street, almost as if she expected to see some dear one coming.

RAILWAYS AND THE LAW.

By CHARLES H. GRINLING.

IT is a common saying that "a company has neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be saved"—the moral of which oracular utterance is usually taken to be that it is wise for an individual to avoid disputes with a corporation. Now, our railways are the biggest joint-stock corporations, or companies, in existence amongst us, and yet there is another trite saying that "a railway company is fair game," which, being interpreted, means that smart people can circumvent the railway authorities and turn the weaknesses of the latter to financial advantage in a variety of ways. To a certain extent, railway companies stand above ordinary law, as they are brought into existence each by its own special Act of Parliament, and everything of importance which they do subsequent to their incorporation is done by virtue of further special Acts granted to them by the Legislature. The most important special privilege obtained by an incorporated railway company is the power to purchase compulsorily the land it requires for its lines, stations, and other works; but whereas Parliament compels the landowner to sell his land to a railway, it gives him many opportunities of "putting the screw on" in regard to price; and in a previous article of this series I have quoted the dictum of an eminent solicitor that "the acuteness exhibited by the landed gentry as to the means of wringing money from a railway company went beyond anything which he or any other individual could have conceived."

Photo by] [*Elliott & Fry.*

THE RIGHT HON. LORD GRIMTHORPE, A VETERAN RAILWAY BARRISTER.

Lord Grimthorpe was called to the Bar in 1841, and "won his spurs" in connection with the "railway mania" of 1845-6. He was for many years leader of the Parliamentary Bar, and won many fights for railway companies in the Committee Rooms at Westminster.

Railway companies, therefore, require the services of legal advisers from the moment of their birth. The highly paid assistance of solicitors, Parliamentary agents, and members of the Parliamentary Bar, is absolutely necessary to obtain the Act of Incorporation giving the initial powers of construction; and so soon as the Bill has been safely piloted through the Committee Rooms at Westminster, the legal gentlemen have their attention turned to the drawing up of the prospectus—if one is required—and to the many formalities which attend the purchase and conveyancing of the land on which the works are to be laid down. It usually happens that a firm of solicitors are amongst the original promoters of a railway project, and if success attends the scheme, to this same foresighted and enterprising firm the valuable legal work of the company subsequently falls. But a railway company in a big way of business requires the undivided attention of quite a number of qualified solicitors, and so in course of time most of the principal companies of the United Kingdom have set up their own legal departments, which hold much the same relation to the general administration as do the departments of the engineer, accountant, surveyor, etc. A few companies — notably the Midland — continue to employ outside firms, but in such cases one of the leading members of the firm does little else but the railway work, and his individual position, and that of his personal staff, in relation to the railway which they serve tends to become much the same as that of the salaried railway lawyers.

The typical railway solicitor of the present day is a salaried officer of the company for whom he works. His offices are at the company's headquarters, he attends there as regularly as do the chiefs of the other departments; and he is present at the meetings of the directors, whenever matters having a legal aspect come up for consideration. And it is astonishing how numerous are the questions arising in connection with railway management as to which legal advice is imperatively required.

We have noted already that every extension

A RAILWAY SOLICITOR AT WORK.

The late Mr. C. H. Mason was appointed Chief Solicitor of the London and North-Western Railway Company in 1883, at the early age of thirty-two, and held that important office with distinction until his sudden death at the close of 1902. He was distinguished as an athlete as well as learned in the law.

of line requires the sanction of the Legislature, in order that compulsory powers for the purchase of the required land may be obtained. A large railway company finds it necessary to promote a Bill of its own almost every Session, as well as most carefully to watch the Bills promoted by other railway companies, tramway and water companies, etc., so as to see that these do not obtain powers to do anything which is likely to be prejudicial to the interests of the particular railway in question. All this involves the maintenance within the railway solicitor's department of a special sub-department devoted exclusively to Parliamentary work, and having an office in the neighbourhood of Westminster, where during the Session, and at the time for depositing Bills—November—its chief activities are carried on.

This Parliamentary work is a very special branch of the legal industry. It does not demand a very profound knowledge of law, but it does require an intimate acquaintance with intricate and elaborate forms of procedure, as well as much skill in strategy and insight into human nature, as personified by the well-bred and well-groomed gentlemen who, in batches of four or five, constitute the special Committees for dealing with railway Bills. The chief solicitor of a railway company always selects the Parliamentary work as matter for his close personal attention. When the Committees are sitting, a dozen or more railway lawyers with their satellites are constantly to be seen flitting about the corridors, or sitting watching the progress of the Bills in the several rooms. Nor do the hours when the Committees sit by any means embrace the whole of the time which Westminster demands of railway solicitors during this their busiest season of the year. There are usually consultations to be held with Parliamentary agents and counsel both before and after the meetings of the Committees, and all the time the chief railway solicitor is conscious that a batch of papers dealing with the current, every-day work of his department is accumulating at his headquarters office, and wondering when he will get a few quiet hours away from Westminster to attend to his multifarious other duties.

Of the members of the Parliamentary Bar there are quite a number who devote them-

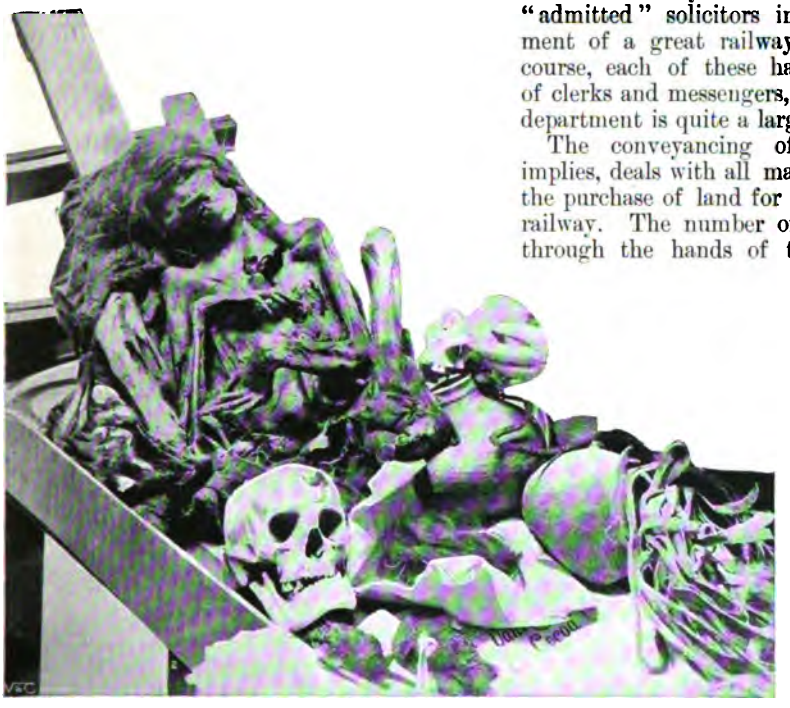
selves mainly to railway work, and whose incomes from their profession would be very much less than they are, were it not for the handsome fees marked on the briefs which they receive from the solicitors of the great railway companies. Amongst eminent barristers who have won fame and fortune by their successful pilotage of railway Bills through Committee may be mentioned Lord Grimthorpe (who was known at the Parliamentary Bar first as Mr. Denison, and then as Sir Edmund Beckett (before he attained his present title on his retirement), the late Mr. Samuel Pope, Mr. C. A. Cripps, Sir Ralph Littler, Mr. Pember, Mr. Balfour Browne, Mr. Ernest Moon, Mr. Honoratus Lloyd, and Mr. Ernest Page—who has recently been appointed Recorder of Carlisle. Sir William Harcourt also practised at the Parliamentary Bar in his younger days and held many railway briefs. The Parliamentary Bar is a very close corporation, and it is exceedingly difficult for a new-comer to obtain recognition. But if a chief railway solicitor takes up a young man of ability and briefs him frequently, his fortune is made. Both the present Lord Grimthorpe, who was leader of the Parliamentary Bar some twenty years ago, and Mr. Ernest Moon, who is one of its brightest ornaments at the present day, had the advantage of being sons of chairmen of railway companies — Sir Richard Moon and Sir Edmund Beckett Denison being the men who made the London and North-Western and Great Northern Railways, respectively, the great undertakings they are to-day.

A RAILWAY BOUNDARY WALL WHICH FIGURED IN THE COURTS.
One of the large stones on the top of this wall fell on the foot of a woman, who unsuccessfully claimed damages from the railway company.

Parliamentary agents come very little before the public, and the nature of their work, which is very largely of a technical and formal character, is not such as to appeal to the popular imagination. Here again the business is in the hands of a comparatively few men, and new firms find it difficult to obtain an *entrée* into what is probably one of the most lucrative, as it is one of the most select departments of the legal professions. The veteran Sir Theodore Martin, who wrote "The Life of the Prince Consort" and married Helena Faucit, is the *doyen* of Parliamentary agents. He came to London from Edinburgh in 1845, and has worked at Westminster in the passing of private Bills from that date until the present time. Although eighty-eight years of age, he was to be seen on several occasions in the Committee Rooms last session.

In addition to their work in the Committee Rooms at Westminster, eminent members of the Parliamentary Bar obtain a good many briefs to represent railway companies in the Court of the Railway and Canal Commission, which sits several times a year at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, and also holds sittings in Edinburgh and Dublin. This tribunal has been specially constituted by the Legislature to deal with disputes arising between railway companies and their customers under the Traffic Acts, and also with controversies between one railway company and another as to through traffic passing over more than one system. Sir Frederick Peel has been a member of this Commission since 1873, and, although eighty-one years of age, he still brings an acute intellect, combined with unequalled

experience, to bear upon the many complicated problems which come up for decision before it. The other permanent member of the Commission is Lord Cobham, a member of the very clever and distinguished Lyttelton family, and eldest brother of the Colonial Secretary. The Court is presided over by a judge in each country, who forms the third and chief member of the Commission. Its present president for England is Mr. Justice Bigham, the judge who tried the ill-fated Whitaker Wright. Mr. Justice Wills, Sir Richard Henn Collins (the Master of the Rolls), and the late Mr. Justice Wright have also been English presidents of the Railway Commission, and it is worth noting that all of these eminent lawyers gained experience as counsel for railway companies at the Bar before being appointed to the Bench.



A GRUESOME RAILWAY CONSIGNMENT WHICH LED TO A LAWSUIT.
The Peruvian mummy which was mistaken for a corpse.

The work to be done in the Parliamentary Committee Rooms and before the Railway and Canal Commission is usually the personal care of the chief solicitor of a large railway company, besides which he usually has several important arbitration cases with rating authorities, contractors, or other railway companies every year, which, from their special character, require his individual attention. The business of the Conveyancing and Common Law sections of his department, as a rule, is of a more ordinary character, and can be entrusted to experienced assistants, working, of course, under the supervision of, and in constant consultation with, their chief. Probably there are about a dozen "admitted" solicitors in the legal department of a great railway company, and, of course, each of these has to have his staff of clerks and messengers, so that the whole department is quite a large one.

The conveyancing office, as its name implies, deals with all matters arising out of the purchase of land for the purposes of the railway. The number of deeds which pass through the hands of this section of the legal staff of a great railway is enormous; and, of course, every document forming part of the company's title to its widely scattered property has to be carefully preserved. It is therefore necessary for every large railway company to have a "muniment-room," or fireproof apartment, in which these deeds may be stored. Some of them are very ancient documents, going as far back as the sixteenth century, and the muniment-room, with its glass-covered oak cases, resembles a miniature British Museum, while its heavy steel doors give it the appearance of a magnified safe. There are between 70,000 and 80,000 deeds carefully stored, arranged in geographical divisions, and indexed, in the muniment-room of one of the largest English railway companies.

The work of the Common Law section of the legal department of a great railway company is very varied, and it takes railway solicitors into all grades of courts, from petty sessions to the House of Lords. One day they may be answering a summons before a stipendiary in London for creating a smoke nuisance, or prosecuting a passenger for travelling without a ticket, and the next they may be fighting an epoch-making suit through the highest courts, such as the famous case

of the Taff Vale Railway Company *versus* the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, which has affected the position of every trade union in the United Kingdom by making their funds liable for penalties arising out of illegal acts on the part of their agents. As the result of this historical case, a cheque for £23,000 was paid by the Amalgamated Society to the Taff Vale Railway Company in settlement of damages and costs.

A great deal of the work of the Common Law section of a railway solicitor's office arises out of claims made upon railway companies for personal injuries to passengers, or damage or loss of freight. Under an Act of 1846, which is known as "Lord Campbell's Act," railway companies are liable to give compensation in cases of death, provided it can be proved that the accident was occasioned by negligence on the part of their servants. They are also liable at Common Law for personal injury by accident so occasioned. In the majority of cases the negligence is admitted, and the negotiations resolve themselves into a question of fixing the amount of the damages—not by any means an easy matter, however. In some instances, on the other hand, the accident is judged, in legal phraseology, to have been "an act of God," and the unfortunate sufferers are debarred from legal redress. Many years ago, on the Great Northern main line, a train was thrown off the track, a number of passengers being killed and others injured. The company disclaimed liability, and a whole series of actions were brought, at least one of which was tried by Lord Campbell himself. It was proved that the damage to the line which caused the accident was due to the action of flood-water, and not one of the sufferers obtained a penny of compensation. It is related that Lord Campbell became so impatient at the indecision of the jurymen who tried one of these cases that, by way of stimulus, he reminded them that in days gone by they would have been liable to be "taken in a cart to the county boundary and thrown into a ditch."

To illustrate the other side of the operation of Lord Campbell's Act, I may perhaps be excused from repeating another incident which I record in my "History of the Great Northern Railway"—the case of Miss Warren, at Spalding station. This lady, a dancing-mistress, had tripped over a hole in the carpet of the station waiting-room, sustaining thereby an injury to her spine; and, although the company brought evidence to show that there had been no hole in the carpet in the early morning, and that it had probably been kicked open the same day by "some gentleman with thick boots"—"it is a farming district," their general manager explained in his evidence—Miss Warren was awarded compensation to the amount of £1,500. This case was quoted in Parliament at the time as an argument for an amendment of the law.

One important railway company some time ago had a case of a woman who was hanging her washing over the railway wall at the end of her garden, when a big stone on the top of the wall fell down and injured her foot. She claimed damages from the company on the score of their negligence in allowing large, loose stones to lie on the top of their wall. Needless to say, liability was denied, and the woman went to law and lost her case.

"Faked-up" claims against railway companies, in connection with injuries alleged to be sustained in accidents on the lines, are of common occurrence. In one instance a cattle-drover brought an action against a great railway for a shock he stated he had sustained in one of their trains; and he hobbled into the witness-box on crutches, apparently in great pain. Serjeant Ballantine was counsel for the defence, and the investigations of the railway solicitor had placed in his hands some correspondence in which the plaintiff admitted that his suit was a "put-up job," and promised to share the plunder with the confederate to whom he was writing. By skilful cross-examination the serjeant led on the drover to admit the authorship of some of the letters; but when he was about to be confronted with his signature to the one in which the attempted fraud was revealed, the plaintiff simply bolted from the witness-box, throwing down his crutches; and he was heard of no more!

In one of the most extraordinary of these cases of simulated injury the plaintiff was a negro. Presumably by some trick unknown to the medical lore of Europe, he managed to assume a ghastly hue, which can only be described as a livid green, and medical men and lawyers were alike deceived. Within a week after the payment to him of a substantial sum as compensation for what were supposed to be incurable injuries, the black man decamped, and he was never seen again. To prevent such a fraud as this, it would be advisable if compensation for personal injuries were payable as an annuity instead of in a lump sum, so that in case of rapid recovery the railway com-

THE RAILWAY AND CANAL COMMISSION COURT AT WORK.

This drawing was made at the Royal Courts of Justice on the 24th of January, 1905. The matter at issue at the time was whether a certain rate for mineral traffic over a portion of the Great Central Railway should be 2s. 1d. or 1s. 8d. per ton. Mr. S. Fay, General Manager of the Great Central, is in the witness-box.

pany might have an opportunity of having the amount of the award revised.

One of the most remarkable cases of attempted fraud upon a railway company, in connection with "bogus" personal injuries, resulted only last year in the claimant being prosecuted for perjury and sentenced to a term of hard labour. Out of hundreds of people travelling by a certain train from Euston on a Saturday afternoon, there was only one—a middle-aged man—who complained of injury in connection with a slight bump occasioned by shunting operations. Had he been content to claim moderate

Photo by] [*Elliott & Fry.*

MR. JUSTICE BIGHAM,

Ex-officio Commissioner for England of the Railway and Canal Commission, who presides over the Court when it sits in London.

compensation, he would probably have been successful, for the "bump" undoubtedly occurred, and his injuries were very cleverly simulated. But he estimated his damages at the high figure of £5,000, supporting his claim by statements as to the large income he had been making in various businesses, to which he was no longer capable of attending. Inquiries into his commercial career had consequently to be instituted by the solicitor's department of the London and North-Western, with the result that an extraordinary story of bankruptcy, fraud, and deceit was unfolded. When the trial came on at the High Court, the plaintiff's evidence-in-chief was absolutely torn to shreds in cross-examination, and the jury dismissed his suit without hearing the witnesses for the railway company. A warrant for perjury was promptly obtained, and a few days later the man was arrested just as he was leaving his home at Brighton to embark for America. He was tried at the Old Bailey, found guilty by the jury without their leaving the box, and sentenced by Mr. Justice Bigham to nine months' hard labour—certainly not a severe sentence, considering that his action had cost the London and North-Western Railway Company over £1,000, and had engrossed almost the whole attention of their assistant Common Law solicitor and his staff for many months.

In connection with this case, it may be interesting to state that every large railway company keeps a staff of detectives whose services are requisitioned to "shadow" individuals who are suspected of having made bogus claims. In bringing the above-mentioned criminal to justice, the work of the North-Western's detective staff played a very important part, as his movements were carefully watched day by day for many months. So it came about that when the perjury trial came on, the company's counsel was able to tell the jury a good many surprising things about the doings of a man who was supposed to have been a confirmed invalid ever since the date of the "accident." On the very same night after the alleged "shattering of his nervous system" he had assisted a lady friend to move from one set of lodgings to another, had spent the night of the "accident" at her new rooms, had amused the baby and had apparently taken part in the mysterious disappearance of the contents of a bottle of whisky, which had been sent out for in the evening, but was found empty on the following morning. These and many other details, inconsistent with the man's account of his serious injuries, were reported by the railway company's detectives, and their recital made a great impression both at the civil and criminal trials.

In connection with damage to, or loss of, goods in transit, many claims are made against railway companies, and whilst those are promptly settled which appear to be *bonâ fide*, many such cases become the subjects of actions in the courts. One of the most remarkable cases of this kind was that of the Peruvian mummy, to which I referred in the November number of this magazine, when dealing with the singular character of some

of the traffic carried over our railways. It will be remembered that in this instance the mummified remains of a Peruvian Inca *en route* for a Belgian museum were mistaken by the railway officials for a corpse; and, the police having been called in, an inquest was actually held over this gruesome consignment. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the evidence placed before them, but added a rider to the effect that "the occurrence did not point to any recent crime having been committed in this country." The consignor of the mummy, a scientific lady, subsequently sued the railway company for damage to her treasure trove — which arrived at the museum in a sadly soiled condition—and a small sum was awarded to her as compensation.

Photo by] *[Elliott & Fry.*

THE LATE MR. SAMUEL POPE, K.C.,

Who, when leader of the Parliamentary Bar was chief counsel for railway companies in many important inquiries.

Photo by] *[Elliott & Fry.*

MR. J. H. BALFOUR BROWNE, K.C.,

Author of "The Law of Railways," who once described himself as the "Public Prosecutor of Railway Companies," but also frequently acts as their counsel both before Parliamentary Committees and Arbitrators and in the Railway Commission Court.

A case of another kind which occurred in Westmorland illustrates the difficulties which railway lawyers sometimes find in securing proper verdicts from country juries. The railway company in this instance was sued for the value of a horse which, never having seen a train before, took a flying leap over the retaining wall when it was first brought into the sight of a railway, and met its death, in the manner predicted in regard to the famous "coo" by George Stephenson, by attempting to charge an oncoming train. On the application of the railway solicitor the judge said there was no case of negligence to go before a jury, and dismissed the suit. Subsequently the legal representative of the railway got into conversation with a member of the jury at the neighbouring hotel, and he happened to remark that the case was so clear that had the action gone on, the result must have been the same. "Eh, mon," was the reply, "ye dinna ken a Westmorland jury!"

Photo by] *[Elliott & Fry.*

SIR RALPH LITTLER, K.C.,

The present leader of the Parliamentary Bar, who annually pilots many Railway Bills through Committees of Parliament.

Photo by] *[Elliott & Fry.*

SIR THEODORE MARTIN,

Who has been engaged at Westminster since 1845 in the promotion of Railway and other Bills. He is head of the firm of Martin and Leslie, Parliamentary Agents.

The above anecdotes could be multiplied almost to an unlimited extent. Those I have given, however, are sufficient to show how varied is the work of a railway solicitor on the Common Law side, and how constantly he has to be on the alert to circumvent the

ingenuity of that considerable section of the public who consider a railway company "fair game," and who are constantly hatching new schemes for diverting into their own pockets some of the large revenues which go towards making up the dividends of railway shareholders. The biggest fraud on record ever perpetrated on a railway company, however, was the work not of a member of the public, but of one of their own officials. I allude to the notorious case of Leopold Redpath, head of the registration department of the Great Northern Railway Company, who pocketed a sum exceeding £200,000, by creating fictitious stock in the company's registers, and selling it through brokers on the Stock Exchange. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this case was that for years before the discovery of his crime Redpath was known to be a very wealthy man, keeping up several large establishments, entertaining lavishly, and giving large sums to charities. And yet he appeared eager to retain his position under the Great Northern, the salary of which was no more than £250 a year! He was sentenced at the Old Bailey on 16th January, 1857, to transportation for life, and was one of the last to undergo that now obsolete punishment. In conjunction with Mr. (now Sir Henry) Oakley, my own father, the late Mr. William Grinling, then and long afterwards an official of the Great Northern, was largely instrumental in bringing this extraordinary "Redpath fraud" to light.

A CITY LOVER.

SHE has slipped from my sight like a bird on the wing;
Spring Valley has called her who's one with the Spring;
Whose voice is so vernal—low, laughing replies—
And who looks upon life through forget-me-not eyes.

How empty the street seems! How dull is the square
That wore such a rapt, such a radiant air!
But ah, how at heart all Spring Valley must sing
At the glimpse of her smile that is one with the Spring!

I am sad, I confess, yet am glad that she knows
The joy of the hills, not the town with its woes—
That to Nature again she may nestle and cling,
That Spring Valley has called her who's one with the Spring.

Some day, thus I dream—ne'er was vision more dear!
The word will be wafted I long so to hear;
Then Spring Valley, to you it's away I shall wing,
And the sweetest of maids who is one with the Spring!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Sheltered awhile in a Buddhist monastery, they hear of the recent visit of a stranger who has told the Lamas that his countryfolk, "dwelling beyond the Far Mountains," worship a priestess called Hes, or the Hesea, and upon persuasion the abbot of the monastery tells them that in a former incarnation he himself has seen the great priestess, who was "all loveliness." A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." The symbol vanishes, the fire sinks, but they are sure that as it was sent of old to show them a path of escape from the Place of Death, so now it has been sent again in greeting to point out the path to the Place of Life where Ayesha dwells. A further ascent into the mountains reveals their Promised Land, with the symbol of their vision, an enormous pillar of rock, whereof the top was formed to the shape of a loop. Peril by avalanche and glacier intervenes, but brings them slowly nearer to their hopes. Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman, and see him chase to a hideous death at the fangs of his hounds a great lord of the land who has dared to make love to her. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the Hesea of the "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers at the Gate, the message concluding: "Bring them safely to the Mountain, knowing that in this matter I shall hold him and you to account. Myself I will not meet them, since to do so would be to break the pact between our powers, which says that the Hesea of the Sanctuary visits not the territory of Kaloon, save in war. Also their coming is otherwise appointed." But Atene's love for Leo makes her detain the travellers awhile in Kaloon, and she even proposes that the Khan shall be murdered so that she can wed Leo. To this the Englishman replies: "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire." The jealous Khan himself assists the escape of the travellers for their further journey.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HUNT AND THE KILL.

WE reached our rooms, meeting no one in the passages, and there made our preparations. First we changed our festal robes for those warmer garments in which we had travelled to the city of Kaloon. Then we ate and drank what we could of the victuals which stood in the ante-chamber, not knowing when we should find more food, and filled two satchels such as these people sling about their shoulders, with the remains of the meat and liquor and a few necessaries. Also we strapped our big hunting-knives about our middles, and armed ourselves with short spears that were made for the stabbing of game.

"Perhaps he has laid a plot to murder us, and we may as well defend ourselves while we can," suggested Leo.

I nodded, for the echoes of the Khan's last laugh still rang in my ears. It was a very evil laugh.

"Likely enough," I said. "I do not trust that insane brute. Still, he wishes to be rid of us."

"Yes; but, as he said, live men may return, whereas the dead do not."

"Atene thinks otherwise," I commented.

"And yet she threatened us with death," answered Leo.

"Because her shame and passion make her mad," I replied, after which we were silent.

Presently the door opened, and through it came the Khan, muffled in a great cloak, as though to disguise himself.

"Come," he said, "if you are ready."

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Then catching sight of the spears we held, he added: "You will not need those things. You do not go a-hunting."

"No," I answered; "but who can say—we might be hunted."

"If you believe that, perhaps you had best stay where you are till the Khania wearies of Yellow-beard and opens the gates for you," he replied, eyeing me with his cunning glance.

"I think not," I said, and we started, the Khan leading the way and motioning us to be silent.

We passed through the empty rooms on to the verandah, and from the verandah down into the courtyard, where he whispered to us to keep in the shadow. For the moon shone very clearly that night—so clearly, I remember, that I could see the grass which grew between the joints of the pavement, and the little shadows thrown by each separate blade upon the worn surface of its stones. Now I wondered how we should pass the gate, for there a guard was stationed, which had of late been doubled by order of the Khania. But this gate we left upon our right, taking a path that led into the great walled garden, where Rassen brought us to a door hidden behind a clump of shrubs, which he unlocked with a key he carried.

Now we were outside the Palace wall, and our road ran past the kennels. As we went by these, the great, sleepless death-hounds, that wandered to and fro like prowling lions, caught our wind and burst into a sudden chorus of terrific bays. I shivered at the sound, for it was fearful in that silence, also I thought that it would arouse the keepers. But the Khan went to the bars and showed himself, whereon the brutes, which knew him, ceased their noise.

"Fear not," he said as he returned; "the huntsmen know that they are starved to-night, for to-morrow certain criminals will be thrown to them."

Now we had reached the Palace gates. Here the Khan bade us hide in an archway, and departed. We looked at each other, for the same thought was in both our minds—that he had gone to fetch the murderers who were to make an end of us. But in this we did him wrong, for presently we heard the sound of horses' hoofs upon the stones, and he returned, leading the two white steeds that Atene had given us.

"I saddled them with my own hands," he whispered. "Who can do more to speed the parting guest? Now mount, hide your faces in your cloaks as I do, and follow me."

So we mounted, and he trotted before us like a running footman, such as the great lords of Kaloon employed when they went about their business or their pleasure. Leaving the main street, he led us through a quarter of the town that had an evil reputation, and down its tortuous byways. Here we met a few revellers, while from time to time night-birds flitted from the doorways and, throwing aside their veils, looked at us; but as we made no sign, drew back again, thinking that we passed to some assignation. We reached the deserted docks upon the river's edge and came to a little quay, alongside of which a broad ferry-boat was fastened.

"You must put your horses into it and row across," Rassen said, "for the bridges are guarded, and without discovering myself I cannot bid the soldiers to let you pass."

So with some little trouble we urged the horses into the boat, where I held them by their bridles, while Leo took the oars.

"Now go your ways, accursed wanderers!" cried the Khan, as he thrust us from the quay, "and pray the Spirit of the Mountain that the old Rat and his pupil—your love, Yellow-beard, your love—are not watching you in their magic-glass. For if so, we may meet again."

Then as the stream caught us, sweeping the boat out towards the centre of the river, he began to laugh that horrible laugh of his, calling after us—

"Ride fast, ride fast for safety, strangers; there is death behind!"

Leo put out his strength and backed water, so that the punt hung upon the edge of the stream.

"I think that we should do well to land again and kill that man, for he means mischief," he said.

He spoke in English, but Rassen must have caught the ring of his voice and guessed its meaning with the cunning of the mad. At least, he shouted—

"Too late, fools!" and with a last laugh turned, ran so swiftly up the quay that his cloak flew out upon the air behind him, and vanished into the shadows at its head.

"Row on," I said, and Leo bent himself to the oars.

But the ferry-boat was cumbersome, and the current swift, so that we were swept down a long way before we could cross it. At length we reached still water near the further shore, and seeing a landing-place, managed to beach the punt and to drag our horses to the bank. Then leaving the craft to drift, for we had no time to scuttle her,

"'Ride fast, ride fast for safety, strangers!'"

we looked to our girths and bridles, and mounted, heading towards the far column of glowing smoke which showed like a beacon above the summit of the House of Fire.

At first our progress was very slow, for here there seemed to be no path, and we were obliged to pick our way across the fields, and to search for bridges that spanned such of the water-ditches as were too wide for us to jump. More than an hour was spent in this work, till we came to a village wherein none was stirring, and here struck a road which seemed to run towards the Mountain, though, as we learned afterwards, it took us very many miles out of our true path. Now for the first time we were able

to canter, and pushed on at some speed, though not too fast, for we wished to spare our horses, and feared lest they might fall in the uncertain light.

A while before dawn the moon sank behind the Mountain, and the gloom grew so dense that we were forced to stop, which we did, holding the horses by their bridles and letting them graze a little on some young corn. Then the sky turned grey, the light faded from the column of smoke that was our guide, the dawn came, blushing red upon the vast snows of the distant Peak, and shooting its arrows through the loop above the pillar. We let the horses drink from a channel that watered the corn, and, mounting them, rode onward slowly.

Now, with the shadows of the night, a weight of fear seemed to be lifted off our hearts, and we grew hopeful—aye, almost joyous. That hated city was behind us. Behind us were the Khania, with her surging, doom-driven passions and her stormy loveliness, the wizardries of her horny-eyed mentor, so old in years and secret sin, and the madness of that strange being, half-devil, half-martyr, at once cruel and a coward—the Khan, her husband, and his polluted Court. In front lay the fire, the snow, and the mystery they hid, sought for so many empty years. Now we could solve it, or we would die. So we pressed forward joyfully to meet our fate, whatever it might be.

For many hours our road ran deviously through cultivated land, where the peasants at their labour laid down their tools and gathered into knots to watch us pass, and quaint, flat-roofed villages, whence the women snatched up their children and fled at the sight of us. They believed us to be lords from the Court who came to work them some harm in person or in property, and their terror told us how the country smarted beneath the rod of the oppressor. By midday, although the Peak seemed to be but little nearer, the character of the land had changed. Now it sloped gently upwards, and therefore could not be irrigated.

Evidently all this great district was dependent on the fall of timely rains, which had not come that spring. Therefore, although the population was still dense, and every rod of the land was under the plough or spade, the crops were failing. It was pitiful to see the green, uneared corn already turning yellow because of the lack of moisture, the beasts searching the starved pastures for food, and the poor husbandmen wandering about their fields or striving to hoe the iron soil.

Here the people seemed to know us as the two foreigners whose coming had been noised abroad, and, the fear of famine having made them bold, they shouted at us as we went by to give them back the rain which we had stolen, or so we understood their words. Even the women and the children in the villages prostrated themselves before us, pointing first to the Mountain and then to the hard, blue sky, and crying to us to send them rain. Once, indeed, we were threatened by a mob of peasants armed with spades and reaping-hooks, who seemed inclined to bar our path, so that we were obliged to put our horses to a gallop and pass through them with a rush. As we went forward, the country grew ever more arid, and its inhabitants more scarce, till we saw no man save a few wandering herds who drove their cattle from place to place in search of provender.

By evening we guessed that we had reached that border tract which was harried by the Mountain tribes, for here strong towers built of stone were dotted about the heaths, doubtless to serve as watch-houses or places of refuge. Whether they were garrisoned by soldiers, I do not know, but I doubt it, for we saw none. It seems probable, indeed, that these forts were relics of days when the land of Kaloon was guarded from attack by rulers of a very different character from that of the present Khan and his immediate predecessors.

At length even the watch-towers were left behind, and by sundown we found ourselves upon a vast uninhabited plain, where we could see no living thing. Now we made up our minds to rest our horses awhile, proposing to push forward again with the moon; for, having the wrath of the Khania behind us, we did not dare to linger. By this evening doubtless she would have discovered our escape, since before sundown, as she had decreed, Leo must make his choice and give his answer. Then, as we were sure, she would strike swiftly. Perhaps her messengers were already at their work rousing the country to capture us, and her soldiers following on our path.

We unsaddled the horses and let them refresh themselves by rolling on the sandy soil, and graze after a fashion upon the coarse tufts of withering herbage which grew around. There was no water here; but this did not so much matter, for both they and we had drunk at a little muddy pool we found not more than an hour before. We were finishing our meal of the food that

"'I felt my bones crack in its mighty jaws.'"

we had brought with us—which, indeed, we needed sorely after our sleepless night and long day's journey—when my horse, which was knee-haltered close at hand, lay down to roll again. This it could not do with ease, because of the rope about its fore-leg, and I watched its efforts idly, till at length, at the fourth attempt, after hanging for a few seconds upon its back, its legs sticking straight into the air, it fell over slowly towards me, as horses do.

"Why are its hoofs so red? Has it cut itself?" asked Leo in an indifferent voice.

As it chanced, I also had just noticed this red tinge, and for the first time, since it was most distinct about the animal's frogs, which until it rolled thus I had not seen. So I rose to look at them, thinking that probably the evening light had deceived us, or that we might have passed through some ruddy-coloured mud. Sure enough, they *were* red, as though a dye had soaked into the horn and the substance of the frogs. What was more, they gave out a pungent, aromatic smell that was unpleasant, such a smell as might arise from blood mixed with musk and spices.

"It is very strange," I said. "Let us look at your beast, Leo."

So we did, and found that its hoofs had been similarly treated.

"Perhaps it is a native mixture to preserve the horn," suggested Leo.

I thought awhile, then a terrible idea struck me.

"I don't want to frighten you," I said, "but I think that we had better saddle up and get on."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I believe that villain of a Khan has doctored our horses."

"What for? To make them go lame?"

"No, Leo, to make them leave a strong scent upon dry ground."

He turned pale. "Do you mean—those hounds?"

I nodded. Then, wasting no more time in words, we saddled up in frantic haste. Just as I fastened the last strap of my saddle, I thought that a faint sound reached my ear.

"Listen," I said. Again it came, and now there was no doubt about it. It was the sound of baying dogs.

"By Heaven! the death-hounds!" said Leo.

"Yes," I answered quietly enough, for at this crisis my nerves hardened and all fear left me, "our friend the Khan is out a-hunting. That is why he laughed."

"What shall we do?" asked Leo. "Leave the horses?"

I looked at the Peak. Its nearest flanks were miles and miles away.

"Time enough to do that when we are forced. We can never reach that mountain on foot; and after they had run down the horses, they would hunt us by spoor or gaze. No, man; ride as you never rode before."

We sprang to our saddles, but before we gave rein I turned and looked behind me. It will be remembered that we had ridden up a long slope which terminated in a ridge, about three miles away, the border of the great plain whereon we stood. Now the sun had sunk behind that ridge, so that, although it was still light, the plain had fallen into shadow. Therefore, while no distant object could be seen upon the plain, anything crossing the ridge remained visible enough in that clear air—at least, to persons of keen sight.

This is what we saw. Over the ridge poured a multitude of little objects, and amongst the last of these galloped a man mounted on a great horse, who led another horse by the bridle.

"All the pack are out," said Leo grimly, "and Rassen has brought a second mount with him. Now I see why he wanted us to leave the spears; and I think," he shouted as we began to gallop, "that before all is done, the Shaman may prove himself a true prophet."

Away we sped through the gathering darkness, heading straight for the Peak. While we went, I calculated our chances. Our horses, as good as any in the land, were strong and fresh, for although we had ridden far, we had not over-pressed them, and their condition was excellent. But doubtless the death-hounds were fresh also, for meaning to run us down at night when he thought that he might catch us sleeping, Rassen would have brought them along easily, following us by inquiry among the peasants, and only laying them on our spoor after the last village had been left behind.

Also he had two mounts, and for aught we knew—though afterwards this proved not to be the case, for he wished to work his wickedness alone and unseen—he might be followed by attendants with relays. Therefore, it would appear that unless we reached some place whither he did not dare to follow, before him—that is, the slopes of the Peak many miles away—he must run us down. There remained the chance also that the dogs would tire and refuse to pursue the chase.

This, however, seemed scarcely probable, for they were extraordinarily swift and strong, and so savage that when once they had scented blood, in which doubtless our horse's hoofs were steeped, they would fall dead from exhaustion sooner than abandon the trail. Indeed, both the Khania and Simbri had often told us as much. Another chance—they might lose the scent; but, seeing its nature, again, this was not probable. Even an English pack will carry the trail of a red herring breast high without a fault for hours, and here was something stronger—a cunning compound of which the tell-tale odour would hold for days. A last chance. If we were forced to abandon our horses, we, their riders, might possibly escape, could we find any place to hide in on that great plain. If not, we should be seen as well as scented, and then——

No, the odds were all against us, but so they had often been before; meanwhile we had three miles start, and perhaps help would come to us from the Mountain, some help unforeseen. So we set our teeth and sped away like arrows while the light lasted.

Very soon it failed, and whilst the moon was hidden behind the mountains, the night grew dark.

Now the hounds gained on us, for in the gloom, which to them was nothing, we did not dare to ride full speed, fearing lest our horses should stumble and lame themselves, or fall. Then it was for the second time since we had dwelt in this land of Kaloon that of a sudden the fire flamed upon the Peak. When we had seen it before, it had appeared to flash across the heavens in one great lighthouse ray concentrated through the loop above the pillar, and there this night also the ray ran far above us like a lance of fire. But now that we were nearer to its fount, we found ourselves bathed in a soft, mysterious radiance like that of the phosphoresence on a summer sea, reflected downwards, perhaps, from the clouds and massy rock roof of the column loop and diffused by the snows beneath.

This unearthly glimmer, faint as it was, helped us much—indeed, but for it, we must have been overtaken, for here the ground was very rough, full of holes, also, made by burrowing marmots. Thus in our extremity help did come to us from the Mountain, until at length the moon rose, when, as quickly as they had appeared, the volcanic fires vanished, leaving behind them nothing but the accustomed pillar of dull, red smoke.

It is a commonplace to speak of the music of hounds at chase, but often I have wondered how that music sounds in the ears of the deer or the fox fleeing for its life. Now, when we filled the place of the quarry, it was my destiny to solve this problem, and I assert with confidence that the progeny of earth can produce no more hideous noise. It had come near to us, and in the desolate silence of the night the hellish harmonies of its volume seemed terrific, yet I could discern the separate notes of which it was composed, especially one deep, bell-like bay.

I remembered that I had heard this bay when we sat in the boat upon the river and saw that poor noble done to death for the crime of loving the Khania. As the hunt passed us then, I observed that it burst from the throat of the leading hound, a huge brute, red in colour, with a coal-black ear, fangs that gleamed like ivory, and a mouth which looked like a hot oven. I even knew the name of the beast, for afterwards the Khan, whose peculiar joy it was, had pointed it out to me. He called it Master, because no dog in the pack dared fight it, and told me that it could kill an armed man alone.

Now, as its baying warned us, Master was not half a mile away!

The coming of the moonlight enabled us to gallop faster, especially as here the ground was smooth, being covered with a short, dry turf, and for the next two hours we gained upon the pack. Yes, it was only two hours, or perhaps less, but it seemed a score of centuries. The slopes of the Peak were now not more than ten miles ahead, but our horses were giving out at last. They had borne us nobly, poor beasts, though we were no light weights, yet their strength had its limits. The sweat ran from them, their sides panted like bellows, they breathed in gasps, they stumbled and would scarcely answer to the flogging of our spear-shafts. Their gallop sank to a jolting canter, and I thought that soon they must come to a dead stop.

We crossed the brow of a gentle rise, from which the ground, that was sprinkled with bush and rocks, sloped downwards to where, some miles below us, the river ran, bounding the enormous flanks of the Mountain. When we had travelled a little way down this slope, we were obliged to turn, in order to pass between two heaps of rock, which brought us side on to its brow. And there, crossing it not more than three hundred yards away, we saw the pack. There were fewer of them now; doubtless many had fallen out of the hunt, but many still remained. Moreover, not far behind them rode the Khan, though

his second mount was gone, or, more probably, he was riding it, having galloped the first to a standstill.

Our poor horses saw them also, and the sight lent them wings, for all the while they knew that they were running for their lives. This we could tell from the way they quivered whenever the baying came near to them—not as horses tremble with the pleasurable excitement of the hunt, but in an extremity of terror, as I have often seen them do when a prowling tiger roars close to their camp. On they went as though they were fresh from the stable, nor did they fail again until another four miles or so were covered and the river was but a little way ahead, for we could hear the rush of its waters.

Then slowly but surely the pack overtook us. We passed a clump of bush, but when we had gone a couple of hundred yards or so across the open plain beyond, feeling that the horses were utterly spent, I shouted to Leo—

"Ride round back to the bush and hide there."

So we did, and scarcely had we reached it and dismounted when the hounds came past. Yes, they went within fifty yards of us, lolloping along upon our spoor and running all but mute, for now they were too weary to waste their breath in vain. "Run for it," I said to Leo as soon as they had gone by, "for they will be back on the scent presently," and we set off to the right across the line that the hounds had taken, so as not to cut our own spoor.

About a hundred yards away was a rock, which fortunately we were able to reach before the pack swung round upon the horses' tracks, and therefore they did not view us. Here we stayed until, following the loop, they came to the patch of bush and passed behind it. Then we ran forward again as far as we could go. Glancing backwards as we went, I saw our two poor, foundered beasts plunging away across the plain, happily almost in the same line along which we had ridden from the rise. They were utterly done, but, freed from our weights and urged on by fear, could still gallop and keep ahead of the dogs, though we knew that this would not be for very long. I saw also that the Khan, guessing what we had done in our despair, was trying to call his hounds off the horses, but as yet without avail, for they would not leave the quarry which they had viewed.

All this came to my sight in a flash, but I remember the picture well. The mighty, snow-clad Peak surmounted by its column of glowing smoke, and casting its shadow for mile upon mile across the desert flats; the plain with its isolated rocks and grey bushes; the doomed horses struggling across it with convulsive bounds; the trailing line of great dogs that loped after them, and amongst these, looking small and lonely in that vast place, the figure of the Khan and his horse, of which the black hide was beflecked with foam. Then, above, the blue and tender sky, where the round moon shone so clearly that in her quiet, level light no detail, even the smallest, could escape the eye.

Now, youth and even middle age were far behind me, and although a very strong man for my years, I could not run as I used to do. Also I was most weary, and my limbs were stiff and chafed with long riding, so I made but slow progress; and, to make matters worse, I struck my left foot against a stone and hurt it much. I implored Leo to go on and leave me, for we thought that if we could once reach the river, our scent would be lost in the water; at any rate, that it would give us a chance of life. Just then I heard the belling bay of the hound Master, and waited for the next. Yes, it was nearer to us. The Khan had made a cast and found our line. Presently we must face the end.

"Go, go!" I said. "I can keep them back for a few minutes, and you may escape. It is your quest, not mine. Ayesha awaits you, not me, and I am weary of life. I wish to die and have done with it."

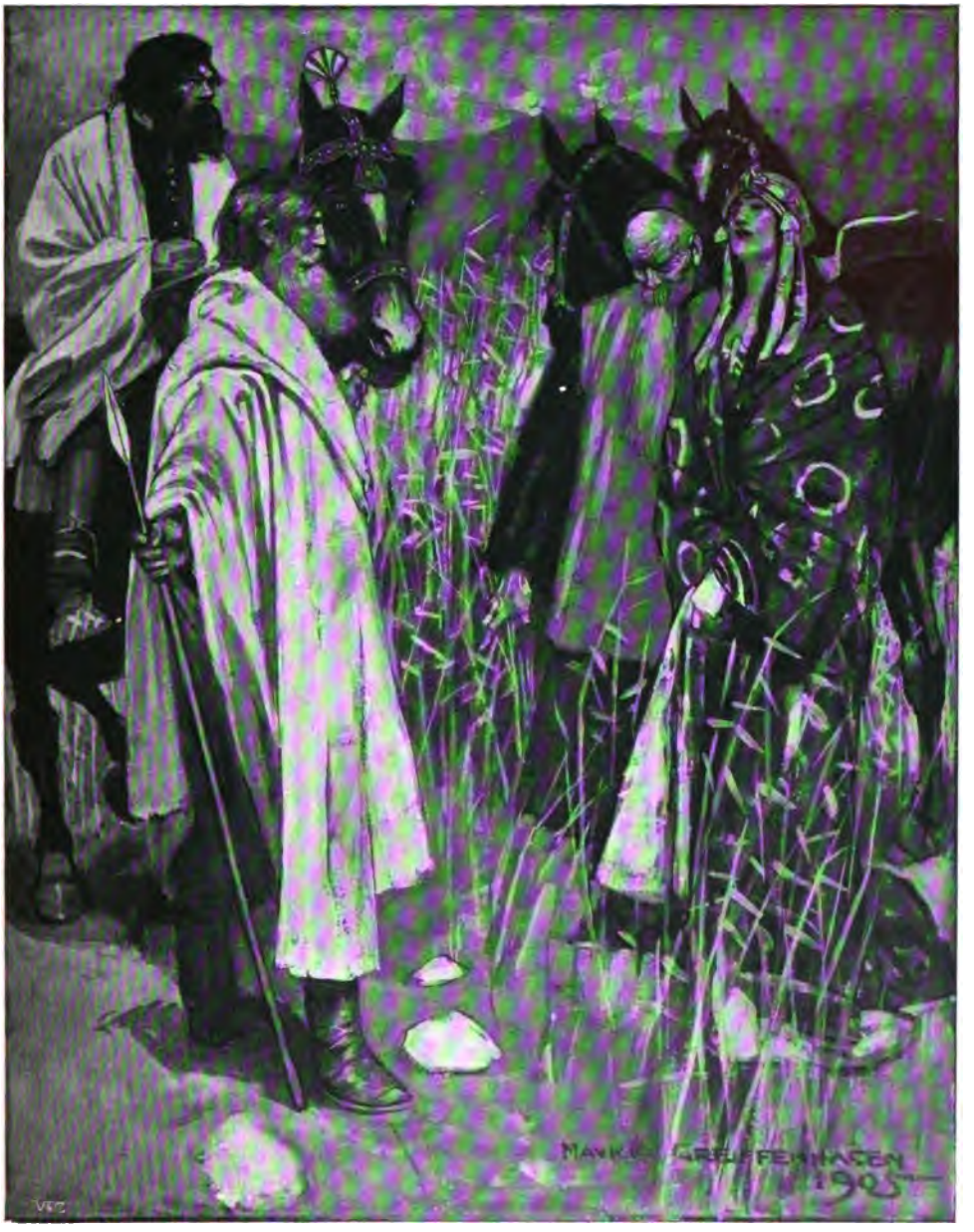
Thus I gasped—not all at once, but in broken words—as I hobbled along, clinging to Leo's arm. But he only answered in a low voice—

"Be quiet, or they will hear you," and on he went, dragging me with him.

We were quite near the water now, for we could see it gleaming below us, and oh! how I longed for one deep drink. I remember that this was the uppermost desire in my mind—to drink and drink. But the hounds were nearer still to us, so near that we could hear the pattering of their feet on the dry ground, mingled with the thud of the hoofs of the Khan's galloping horse. We had reached some rocks upon a little rise, just where the bank began, when Leo said suddenly—

"No use; we can't make it. Stop and let's see the thing through."

So we wheeled round, resting our backs against the rock. There, about a hundred yards off, were the death-hounds; but, Heaven be praised! *only three of them!* The



"'We go to accomplish our fate.'"

rest had followed the flying horses, and doubtless when they caught them at last, which may have been far distant, had stopped to gorge themselves upon them. So they were out of the fight. Only three, and the Khan, a wild figure, who galloped with them; but those three, the black and red brute, Master, and two others almost as fierce and big.

"It might be worse," said Leo. "If you will try to tackle the dogs, I'll do my best with the Khan," and stooping down, he rubbed his palms in the grit, for they were wet as water—an example which I followed. Then we gripped the spears in our right hands and the knives in our left, and waited.

The dogs had seen us now and came on, growling and baying fearfully. With a rush

they came, and I am not ashamed to own that I felt terribly afraid, for the brutes seemed the size of lions and more fierce. One—it was the smallest of them, outstripped the others and, leaping up the little rise, sprang straight at my throat.

Why or how, I do not know, but on the impulse of the moment I, too, sprang to meet it, so that its whole weight came upon the point of my spear, which was backed by my weight. The spear entered between its fore-legs, and such was the shock that I was knocked backwards. But when I regained my feet, I saw the dog rolling on the ground before me and gnashing at the spear-shaft, which had been twisted from my hand.

The other two had jumped at Leo, but failed to get hold, though one of them tore away a large fragment from his tunic. Foolishly enough, he hurled his spear at it, but missed, for the steel passed just under its belly and buried itself deep in the ground. The pair of them did not come on again at once. Perhaps the sight of their dying companion made them pause. At any rate, they stood at a little distance snarling, where, as our spears were gone, they were safe from us.

Now the Khan had ridden up and sat upon his horse glowering at us, and his face was like the face of a devil. I had hoped that he might fear to attack, but the moment I saw his eyes, I knew that this would not be. He was quite mad with hate, jealousy, and the long-drawn excitement of the hunt, and had come to kill or be killed. Sliding from the saddle, he drew his short sword—for either he had lost his spear or had brought none—and made a hissing noise to the two dogs, pointing at me with the sword. I saw them spring, and I saw him rush at Leo, and after that who can tell exactly what happened?

My knife went home to the hilt in the body of one dog, and it came to the ground and lay there—for its hind-quarters were paralysed—howling, snarling, and biting at me. But the other, the fiend called Master, got me by the right arm beneath the elbow, and I felt my bones crack in its mighty jaws; and the agony of it—or so I suppose—caused me to drop the knife, so that I was weaponless. The brute dragged me from the rock and began to shake and worry me, although I kicked it in the stomach with all my strength. I fell to my knees and, as it chanced, my left hand came upon a stone of about the size of a large orange, which I gripped. I gained my feet again and pounded at its skull with the stone, but still it did not leave go; and this was well for me, for its next hold would have been on my throat.

We twisted and tumbled to and fro, man and dog together. At one turn I thought that I saw Leo and the Khan rolling over and over each other upon the ground; at another, that he, the Khan, was sitting against a stone looking at me, and it came into my mind that he must have killed Leo and was watching while the dog worried me to death.

Then, just as things began to grow black, something sprang forward, and I saw the huge hound lifted from the earth. Its jaws opened, my arm came free and fell against my side. Yes! the brute was whirling round in the air. Leo held it by its hind-legs, and with all his great strength whirled it round and round.

Thud! He had dashed its head against a rock, and it fell and lay still, a huddled heap of black and red.

Oddly enough, I did not faint; I suppose that the pain and the shock to my nerves kept me awake, for I heard Leo say in a matter-of-fact voice between his gasps for breath—

"Well, that's over, and I think that I have fulfilled the Shaman's prophecy. Let's look and make sure."

Then he led me with him to one of the rocks, and there, resting, supinely against it, sat the Khan, still living, but unable to move hand or foot. The madness had quite left his face, and he looked at us with melancholy eyes, like the eyes of a sick child.

"You are brave men," he said slowly; "strong also, to have killed those hounds and broken my back. So it has come about as was foretold by the old Rat. After all, I should have hunted Atene, not you; though now she lives to avenge me, for her own sake, not mine. Yellow-beard, she hunts you too, and with deadlier hounds than these—those of her thwarted passions. Forgive me and fly to the Mountain, Yellow-beard, whither I go before you, for there one dwells who is stronger than Atene."

Then his jaw dropped and he was dead.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MESSENGER.

"He is gone," I panted, "and the world hasn't lost much."

"Well, it didn't give him much, did it, poor devil? so don't let's speak ill of him,"

answered Leo, who had thrown himself exhausted to the ground. "Perhaps he was all right before they made him mad. At any rate, he had pluck, for I don't want to tackle such another."

"How did you manage it?" I asked.

"Dodged in beneath his sword, closed with him, threw him, and smashed him over that lump of stone. Sheer strength, that's all. A cruel business, but it was his life or mine, and there you are. It's lucky I finished it in time to help you, before that oven-mouthed brute tore your throat out. Did you ever see such a dog? It looks as large as a young donkey. Are you much hurt, Horace?"

"Oh, my forearm is chewed to a pulp, but nothing else, I think. Let us get down to the water; if I can't drink soon, I shall faint. Also the rest of the pack is somewhere about—fifty or more of them."

"I don't think they will trouble us; they have got the horses, poor beasts. Wait a minute, and I will come."

Then he rose, found the Khan's sword, a beautiful and ancient weapon, and with a single cut of its keen edge killed the second dog that I had wounded, which was still yowling and snarling at us. After this he collected the two spears and my knife, saying that they might be useful, and without trouble caught the Khan's horse, which stood with hanging head close by, so tired that even this desperate fight had not frightened it away.

"Now," he said, "up you go, old fellow—you are not fit to walk any farther"; and with his help I climbed into the saddle.

Then slipping the rein over his arm, he led the horse, which walked stiffly, on to the river, that ran within a quarter of a mile of us, though to me, tortured as I was by pain, and half delirious with exhaustion, the journey seemed long enough.

Still, we came there somehow, and forgetting my wounds, I tumbled from the horse, threw myself flat, and drank and drank, more, I think, than ever I did before. Not in all my life have I tasted anything so delicious as was that long draught of water. When I had satisfied my thirst, I dipped my head and made shift to jerk my wounded arm into it, for its coolness seemed to still the pain. Presently Leo rose, the water running from his face and beard, and said—

"What shall we do now? The river seems to be wide, over a hundred yards, and it is low, but there may be deep water in the middle. Shall we try to cross—in which case we might drown; or stop where we are till daylight and take our chance of the death-hounds?"

"I can't go another foot," I murmured faintly, "much less try to ford an unknown river."

Now, about thirty yards from the shore was an island covered with reeds and grasses.

"Perhaps we could reach that," he said. "Come, get on to my back, and we will try."

I obeyed with difficulty, and we set out, he feeling his way with the handle of the spear. The water proved to be quite shallow; indeed, it never came much above his knees, so that we reached the island without trouble. Here Leo laid me down on the soft rushes, and, returning to the mainland, brought over the black horse and the remaining weapons, and having unsaddled the beast, knee-haltered and turned it loose, whereon it immediately lay down, for it was too spent to feed.

Then he set to work to doctor my wounds. Well it proved for me that the sleeve of my garment was so thick, for even through it the flesh of my forearm was torn to ribbons; moreover, a bone seemed to be broken. Leo collected a double handful of some soft, wet moss and, having washed the arm, wrapped it round with a handkerchief, over which he laid the moss. Then with a second handkerchief and some strips of linen torn from our undergarments, he fastened a couple of split reeds to serve as rough splints to the wounded limb. While he was doing this I suppose that I slept or swooned. At any rate, I remember no more.

* * * * *

Sometime during that night Leo had a strange dream, of which he told me the next morning. I suppose that it must have been a dream, as certainly I saw or was aware of nothing. Well, he dreamed—I use his own words as nearly as possible—that again he heard those accursed death-hounds in full cry. Nearer and nearer they came, following our spoor to the edge of the river—all the pack that had run down the horses. At the water's brink they halted and were mute. Then suddenly a puff of wind brought the scent of us upon the island to one of them, which lifted up its head and uttered a single bay. The rest clustered about it, and all at once they made a dash at the water.

Leo could see and hear everything. He felt that, after all, our doom was now at hand, and yet, held in the grip of nightmare, if nightmare it were, he was quite unable to stir or even to cry out to wake and warn me.

Now followed the marvel of this vision. Giving tongue as they came, half swimming and half plunging, the hounds drew near to the island where we slept. Then suddenly Leo saw that we were no longer alone. In front of us, on the brink of the water, stood the figure of a woman clad in some dark garment. He could not describe her face or appearance, for her back was towards him. All he knew was that she stood there, like a guard, holding some object in her raised hand, and that suddenly the advancing hounds caught sight of her. In an instant it was as though they were paralysed by fear —for their bays turned to fearful howlings. One or two of those that were nearest to the island seemed to lose their footing and be swept away by the stream. The rest struggled back to the bank and fled wildly like whipped curs.

Then the dark, commanding figure, which in his dream Leo took to be the guardian Spirit of the Mountain, vanished. That it left no footprints behind it I can vouch, for in the morning we looked to see.

* * * * *

When, awakened by the sharp pangs in my arm, I opened my eyes again, the dawn was breaking. A thin mist hung over the river and the island, and through it I could see Leo sleeping heavily at my side, and the shape of the black horse, which had risen and was grazing close at hand. I lay still for awhile, remembering all that we had undergone and wondering that I should live to wake, till presently above the murmuring of the water I heard a sound which terrified me, the sound of voices. I sat up and peered through the reeds, and there upon the bank, looking enormous in the mist, I saw two figures mounted upon horses, those of a woman and a man.

They were pointing to the ground, as though they examined spoor in the sand. I heard the man say something about the dogs not daring to enter the territory of the Mountain, a remark which came back to my mind again after Leo had told me his dream. Then I remembered how we were placed.

"Wake!" I whispered to Leo. "Wake! we are pursued!"

He sprang to his feet, rubbing his eyes and snatching at a spear. Now those upon the bank saw him, and a sweet voice spoke through the mist, saying—

"Lay down that weapon, my guest, for we are not come to harm you."

It was the voice of the Khania Atene, and the man with her was the old Shaman Simbri.

"What shall we do now, Horace?" asked Leo with something like a groan, for in the whole world there were no two people whom he less wished to see.

"Nothing," I answered; "it is for them to play."

"Come to us!" called the Khania across the water. "I swear that we mean no harm. Are we not alone?"

"I do not know," answered Leo, "but it seems unlikely. Where we are, we stop until we are ready to march again."

Atene spoke to Simbri. What she said we could not hear, for she whispered, but she appeared to be arguing with him and persuading him to some course of which he strongly disapproved. Then suddenly both of them put their horses at the water and rode to us through the shallows. Reaching the island, they dismounted, and we stood staring at each other. The old man seemed very weary in body and oppressed in mind, but the Khania was strong and beautiful as ever, nor had passion and fatigue left any trace upon her inscrutable face. It was she who broke the silence, saying —

"You have ridden fast and far since last we met, my guests, and left an evil token to mark the path you took. Yonder among the rocks one lies dead. Say, how came he to his end, who has no wound upon him?"

"By these," answered Leo, stretching out his hands.

"I knew it," she answered; "and I blame you not, for Fate decreed that death for him, and now it is fulfilled. Still, there are those to whom you must answer for his blood, and I only can protect you from them."

"Or betray me to them," said Leo. "Khania, what do you seek?"

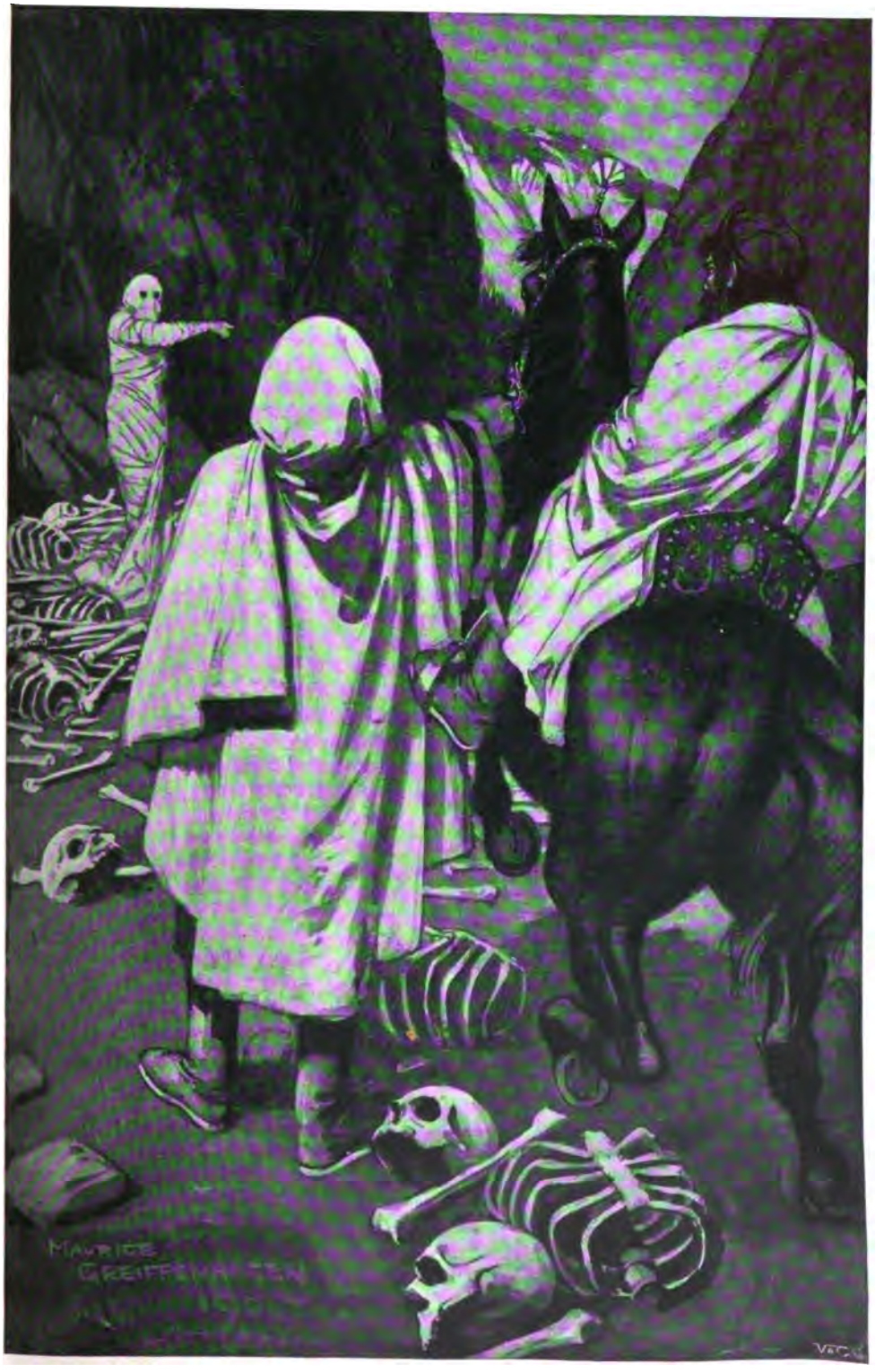
"That answer which you should have given me this twelve hours gone. Remember, before you speak, that I alone can save your life—aye, and will do it and clothe you with that dead madman's crown and mantle."

"You shall have your answer on yonder Mountain," said Leo, pointing to the Peak above us, "where I seek mine."

She paled a little and replied: "To find that it is death; for, as I have told you, the place is guarded by savage folk who know no pity."

"So be it. Then Death is the answer that we seek. Come, Horace, let us go to meet him."

"I swear to you," she broke in, "that there dwells not the woman of your dreams.



"It stood up, a human figure."

I am that woman—yes, even I, as you are the man of mine."

"Then, lady, prove it yonder upon the Mountain," Leo answered.

"There dwells there no woman," Atene went on hurriedly—"nothing dwells there. It is the home of fire and—a Voice."

"What voice?"

"The Voice of the Oracle that speaks from the fire. The Voice of a spirit whom no man has ever seen or shall see."

"Come, Horace," said Leo, and he moved towards the horse.

"Men," broke in the old Shaman, "would you rush upon your doom? Listen; I have visited yonder haunted place, for it was I who according to custom brought thither the body of the Khan Atene's father for burial, and I warn you to set no foot within its temples."

"Which your mistress said that we should never reach," I commented, but Leo only answered—

"We thank you for your warning," and added: "Horace, watch them while I saddle the horse, lest they do us a mischief."

So I took the spear in my uninjured hand and stood ready. But they made no attempt to hurt us, only fell back a little and began to talk in hurried whispers. It was evident to me that they were much perturbed. In a few minutes the horse was saddled and Leo assisted me to mount it. Then he said—

"We go to accomplish our fate, whatever it may be; but before we part, Khania, I thank you for the kindness you have shown us, and pray you to be wise and forget that we have ever been. Through no will of mine your husband's blood is on my hands, and that alone must separate us for ever. We are divided by the doors of death and destiny. Go back to your people, and pardon me if most unwillingly I have brought you doubt and trouble. Farewell."

She listened with bowed head, then replied, very sadly—

"I thank you for your gentle words; but, Leo Vincey, we do not part thus easily. You have summoned me to the Mountain, and even to the Mountain I will follow you. Aye, and there I will meet its Spirit, as I have always known I must, and as the Shaman here has always known I must. Yes, I will match my strength and magic against hers, as it is decreed that I shall do. To the victor be that crown for which we have warred for ages!"

Then suddenly Atene sprang to her saddle, and turning her horse's head, rode it back through the water to the shore, followed by old Simbri, who lifted up his cruel hands as though in woe and fear, muttering as he went—

"You have entered the forbidden river, and now, Atene, the day of decision is upon us all—upon us and her—that predestined day of ruin and of war."

"What do they mean?" asked Leo of me.

"I don't know," I answered; "but I have no doubt we shall find out soon enough, and that it will be something unpleasant. Now for this river."

Before we had struggled through it I thought more than once that the day of drowning was upon us also, for in places there were deep rapids which nearly swept us away. But Leo, who waded, leading the Khan's horse by the bridle, felt his path and supported himself with the spear-shaft, so that in the end we reached the other bank safely.

Beyond it lay a breadth of marshy lands, that doubtless were overflowed when the torrent was in flood. Through these we pushed our way as fast as we could, for we feared lest the Khania had gone to fetch her escort, which we thought she might have left behind the rise, and would return with it presently to hunt us down. At that time we did not know what we learned afterwards—that with its bordering river the soil of the Mountain was absolutely sacred and, in practice, inviolable. True, it had been invaded by the people of Kaloon in several wars, but on each occasion their army was destroyed or met with terrible disaster. Little wonder, then, that they had come to believe that the House of Fire was under the protection of some unconquerable spirit.

Leaving the marsh, we reached a bare, rising plain, which led to the first slope of the Mountain three or four miles away. Here we expected every moment to be attacked by the savages of whom we had heard so much; but no living creature did we see. The place was a desert streaked with veins of rock that once had been molten lava. I do not remember much else about it; indeed, the pain in my arm was so sharp that I had no eyes for physical features. At length the rise ended in a bare, broad *donga*, quite destitute of vegetation, of which the bottom was buried in lava and a *débris* of rocks washed down by the rain or melting snows from slopes above. This *donga* was bordered on the farther side by a cliff, perhaps fifty feet in height, in which we could see no opening.

Still we descended the place, that was dark and rugged; pervaded, moreover, by an extraordinary gloom; and as we went, perceived that its lava floor was sprinkled over with a multitude of white objects. Soon we came to the first of these, and found that it was the skeleton of a human being. Here was a veritable Valley of Dry Bones, thousands upon thousands of them, a gigantic graveyard. It seemed as though some great army had perished here.

Indeed, we found afterwards that this was the case, for on one of those occasions in the far past, when the people of Kaloon had attacked the Mountain tribes, they were trapped and slaughtered in this gully, leaving their bones as a warning and a token. Among these sad skeletons we wandered disconsolately, seeking a path up the opposing cliff, and finding none, until at length we came to a halt, not knowing which way to turn. Then it was that we met with our first strange experience on the Mountain.

The gulf and its mouldering relics depressed us, so that for a while we were silent, and, to tell the truth, somewhat afraid. Yes, even the horse seemed afraid, for it snorted a little, hung its head, and shivered. Close by us lay a pile of bones, the remains evidently of a number of wretched creatures that, dead or living, had been hurled down from the cliff above, and on the top of the pile was a little huddled heap, which we took for more bones.

"Unless we can find a way out of this accursed charnel-house before long, I think that we shall add to its company," I said, staring round me.

As the words left my lips it seemed to me that from the corner of my eye I saw the heap on the top of the bones stir. I looked round. Yes, it was stirring. It rose—it stood up, a human figure, apparently that of a woman, but of this I could not be sure—wrapped from head to foot in white, and wearing a hanging veil over its face, or, rather, a mask with cut eyeholes. It advanced towards us while we stared at it, till the horse, catching sight of the thing, shied violently and nearly threw me. When at a distance of about ten paces, it paused and beckoned with its hand, that was also swathed in white like the arm of a mummy.

"What the devil are you?" shouted Leo, and his voice echoed drearily among those naked rocks. But the creature did not answer, it only continued to beckon.

Leo walked up to it to assure himself that we were not the victims of some hallucination. As he came, it glided back to its heap of bones and stood there like a ghost of one dead arisen from amidst these grinning evidences of death—or, rather, a swathed corpse, for that is what it resembled. Leo followed with the intention of touching it to assure himself of its reality, whereon it lifted its white-wrapped arm and struck him lightly on the breast. Then, as he recoiled, it pointed with its hand, first upwards, as though to the Peak or the sky, and next at the wall of rock which faced us.

He returned to me, saying: "What shall we do?"

"Follow, I suppose. It may be a messenger from above"; and I nodded towards the mountain crest.

"From below, more likely," Leo muttered; "for I don't like the look of this guide."

Still he motioned with his hand to the creature to proceed. Apparently it understood, for it turned to the left and began to pick its way amongst the stones and skeletons swiftly and without noise. We followed for several hundred yards till it reached a shallow cleft in the rock. This cleft we had seen already, but as it appeared to end at a depth of about thirty feet, we passed on. The figure entered here and vanished.

"It must be a shadow," said Leo doubtfully.

"Nonsense!" I answered; "shadows don't strike one. Go on."

So he led the horse up the cleft, to find that at the end it turned sharply to the right, and that the form was standing there awaiting us. Forward it went again, and we after it, down a little gorge that grew ever gloomier till it terminated in what might have been a cave or a gallery cut in the rock.

Here our guide came back to us, apparently with the intention of taking the horse by the bridle; but at this nearer sight of it the brute snorted and reared up, so that it almost fell backwards upon me. As it found its feet again, the figure struck it on the head in the same passionless, inhuman way that it had struck Leo, whereon the horse trembled and burst into a sweat as though with fear, making no further attempt to escape or to disobey. Then it took one side of the bridle in its swathed hand, and, Leo clinging to the other, we plunged into the tunnel.

Our position was not pleasant, for we knew not whither we were being led by

this horrible conductor, and suspected that it might be to meet our deaths in the darkness. Moreover, I guessed that the path was narrow and bordered by some gulf, for as we went I heard stones fall, apparently to a considerable depth, while the poor horse lifted its feet gingerly and snorted in abject fear. At length we saw daylight, and never was I more glad of its advent, although it showed us that there *was* a gulf on our right, and that the path we travelled could not measure more than ten feet in width.

Now we were out of the tunnel, that evidently had saved us a wide detour, and standing for the first time upon the actual slope of the Mountain, which stretched upwards for a great number of miles till it reached the snow-line above. Here also we saw evidences of human life, for the ground was cultivated in patches, and herds of mountain sheep and cattle were visible in the distance.

Presently we entered a gully, following a rough path that led along the edge of a raging torrent. It was a desolate place, half a mile wide or more, having hundreds of fantastic lava boulders strewn about its slopes. Before we had gone a mile I heard a shrill whistle, and suddenly from behind these boulders sprang a number of men, quite fifty of them. All we could note at the time was that they were brawny, savage-looking fellows, for the most part red haired and bearded, although their complexions were rather dark, who wore cloaks of white goatskins and carried spears and shields. I should imagine they were not unlike the ancient Picts and Scots as they appeared to the invading Romans. At us they came, uttering their shrill, whistling cries, evidently with the intention of spearing us on the spot.

"Now for it," said Leo, drawing his sword, for escape was impossible; they were all round us. "Good-bye, Horace."

"Good-bye," I answered rather faintly, understanding what the Khania and the old Shaman had meant when they said that we should be killed before we ascended the first slope of the Mountain.

Meanwhile, our ghastly looking guide had slipped behind a great boulder, and even then it occurred to me that her part in the tragedy being played, she, if it were a woman at all, was withdrawing herself while we met our miserable fate. But here I did her injustice, for she had, I suppose, come to save us from this very fate which without her presence we must most certainly have suffered. When the savages were within a few yards, suddenly she appeared on the top of the boulder, looking like a second Witch of Endor, and stretched out her arm. Not a word did she speak, only stretched out her draped arm, but the effect was remarkable and instantaneous.

At the sight of her, down on to their faces went those wild men, every one of them, as though a lightning stroke had in an instant swept them out of existence. Then she let her arm fall and beckoned, whereon a great fellow, who, I suppose, was the leader of the band, rose and crept towards her with bowed head, submissive as a beaten dog. To him she made signs, pointing to us, pointing to the far-off Peak, crossing and uncrossing her white-wrapped arms, but, so far as I could hear, speaking no word. It was evident that the chief understood her, however, for he said something in a guttural language. Then he uttered his shrill whistle, whereon the band arose and departed thence at full speed, this way and that, so that in another minute they had vanished as quickly as they came.

Now our guide motioned to us to proceed, and led the way upward as calmly as though nothing had happened.

For over two hours we went on thus, till our path brought us from the ravine on to a grassy declivity, across which it wound its way. Here, to our astonishment, we found a fire burning, and hanging above the fire an earthenware pot, which was on the boil, although we could see no man tending it. The figure signalled to me to dismount, pointing to the pot in token that we were to eat the food which doubtless she had ordered the wild men to prepare for us; and very glad was I to obey her. Provision had been made for the horse also, for near the fire lay a great bundle of green forage.

While Leo off-saddled the beast and spread the provender for it, taking with me a spare earthern vessel that lay ready, I went to the edge of the torrent to drink and steep my wounded arm in its ice-bound stream. This relieved it greatly, though by now I was sure from various symptoms that the brute Master's fangs had fortunately only broken or injured the small bone, a discovery for which I was thankful enough. Having finished attending to it as well as I was able, I filled the jar with water.

On my way back a thought struck me, and going to where our mysterious guide stood still as Lot's wife after she had been turned into

"At length it seemed to lift its paw and strike the girl upon the face."

a pillar of salt, I offered it to her, hoping that she would unveil her face and drink. Then for the first time she showed some sign of being human, or so I thought, for it seemed to me that she bowed ever so little in acknowledgment of the courtesy. If so—and I may have been mistaken—this was all, for the next instant she turned her back upon me to show that it was declined. So she would not—or, for aught I knew, could not—drink. Neither would she eat, for when Leo tried her afterwards with food, she refused it in like fashion.

Meanwhile he had taken the pot off the fire, and as soon as its contents grew cool enough we fell on them eagerly, for we were starving. After we had eaten and drunk, Leo re-dressed my arm as best he could, and we rested awhile. Indeed, I think that, being very tired, we began to doze, for I was awakened by a shadow falling on us, and looked up to see our corpselike guide standing close by and pointing first to the sun, then at the horse, as though to show us that we had far to travel. So we saddled up and went on again somewhat refreshed, for at least we were no longer ravenous.

All the rest of that day we journeyed on up the grassy slopes, seeing no man, although occasionally we heard the wild whistle which told us that we were being watched by the Mountain savages. By sundown the character of the country had changed, for the grass was replaced with rocks, amongst which grew stunted firs. We had left the lower slopes and were beginning to climb the Mountain itself.

The sun sank, and we went on through the twilight. The twilight died, and we went on through the dark, our path lit only by the stars and the faint radiance of the glowing pillar of smoke above the Peak, which was reflected on to us from the mighty mantle of its snows. Forward we toiled, whilst a few paces ahead of us walked our unwearying guide. If she had seemed weird and inhuman before, now she appeared a very ghost, as, clad in her graveyard white, upon which the faint light shimmered, never speaking, never looking back, she glided on noiselessly between the black rocks and the twisted, dark-green firs and junipers.

Soon we lost all count of the road. We turned this way and turned that way, we passed an open patch and through the shadows of a grove, till at length as the moon rose we entered a ravine, and following a path that ran down it, came to a place which is best described as a large amphitheatre cut by the hand of Nature out of the rock of the Mountain. Evidently it was chosen as a place of defence, for its entrance was narrow and tortuous, built up at the end also, so that only one person could pass its gateway at a time. Within an open space and at its farther side stood low, stone houses built against the rock. In front of these houses, the moonlight shining full upon then, were gathered several hundred men and women arranged in a semicircle and in alternate companies, who appeared to be engaged in the celebration of some rite.

It was wild enough. In front of them, and in the exact centre of the semicircle, stood a gigantic, red-bearded man, who was naked except for a skin girdle about his loins. He was swinging himself backwards and forwards, his hands resting upon his hips, and as he swung, shouting something like "*Ho, haha, ho!*" When he bent towards the audience, it bent towards him; and every time he straightened himself, it echoed his final shout of "*Ho!*" in a volume of sound that made the precipices ring. Nor was this all, for perched upon his hairy head, with arched back and waving tail, stood a great white cat.

Anything stranger, and, indeed, more fantastic, than the general effect of this scene, lit by the bright moonlight and set in that wild arena, it was never my lot to witness. The red-haired, half-naked men and women, the gigantic priest, the mystical white cat, that, gripping his scalp with its claws, waved its tail and seemed to take a part in the performance; the unholy chant and its volleying chorus, all helped to make it extraordinarily impressive. This struck us the more, perhaps, because at the time we could not in the least guess its significance, though we imagined that it must be preliminary to some sacrifice or offering. It was like the fragment of a nightmare preserved by the awakened senses in all its mad, meaningless reality.

Now, round the open space where these savages were celebrating their worship, or whatever it might be, ran a rough stone wall about six feet in height, in which wall was a gateway. Towards this we advanced quite unseen, for upon our side of the wall grew many stunted pines. Through these pines our guide led us, till in the thickest of them, some few yards from the open gateway and a little to the right of it, she motioned to us to stop.

Then she went to a low place in the wall and stood there, as though she were con-

sidering the scene beyond. It seemed to us, indeed, that she saw what she had not expected, and was thereby perplexed or angered. Presently she appeared to make up her mind, for again she motioned to us to remain where we were, enjoining silence upon us by placing her swathed hand upon the mask that hid her face. Next moment she was gone. How she went, or whither, I cannot say; all we knew was that she was no longer there.

"What shall we do now?" whispered Leo to me.

"Stay where we are till she comes back again or something happens," I answered.

So, there being nothing else to be done, we stayed, hoping that the horse would not betray us by neighing, or that we might not be otherwise discovered, since we were certain that, if so, we should be in danger of our lives. Very soon, however, we forgot the anxieties of our own position in the study of the wild scene before us, which now began to develop a fearful interest.

It would seem that what has been described was but preliminary to the drama itself, and that this drama was the trial of certain people for their lives. This we could guess, for after awhile the incantation ceased, and the crowd in front of the big man with the cat upon his head opened out, while behind him a column of smoke rose into the air, as though light had been set to some sunk furnace.

Into the space that had thus been cleared were now led seven persons, whose hands were tied behind them. They were of both sexes and included an old man and a woman with a tall and handsome figure, who appeared to be quite young—scarcely more than a girl, indeed. These seven were ranged in a line where they stood, clearly in great fear, for the old man fell upon his knees, and one of the women began to sob. Thus they were left awhile, perhaps to allow the fire behind them to burn up, which it soon did with great fierceness, throwing a vivid light upon every detail of the spectacle.

Now all was ready, and a man brought a wooden tray to the red-bearded priest, who was seated on a stool, the white cat upon his knees, whither we had seen it leap from his head a little while before. He took the tray by its handles, and at a word from him the cat jumped on to it and sat there. Then amidst the most intense silence he rose and uttered some prayer, apparently to the cat, which sat facing him. This done, he turned the tray round so that the creature's back was now towards him, and, advancing to the line of prisoners, began to walk up and down in front of them, which he did several times, at each turn drawing a little nearer.

Holding out the tray, he presented it at the face of the prisoner on the left, whereon the cat rose, arched its back, and began to lift its paws up and down. Presently he moved to the next prisoner and held it before him awhile, and so on till he came to the fifth, that young woman of whom I have spoken. Now the cat grew very angry, for in the deathlike stillness we could hear it spitting and growling. At length it seemed to lift its paw and strike the girl upon the face, whereon she screamed aloud, a terrible scream. Then all the audience broke out into a shout, a single word, which we understood, for we had heard one very like it used by the people of the Plain. It was "Witch! Witch! *Witch!*"

Executioners, who were waiting for the victim to be chosen in this ordeal by cat, rushed forward and seizing the girl began to drag her towards the fire. The prisoner who was standing by her, and whom we rightly guessed to be her husband, tried to protect her, but his arms being bound, poor fellow, he could do nothing. One of the executioners knocked him down with a stick. For a moment his wife escaped and threw herself upon him, but the brutes lifted her up again, haling her towards the fire, whilst all the audience shouted wildly.

"I can't stand this," said Leo; "it's murder—cold-blooded murder," and he drew his sword.

"Best leave the beasts alone," I answered doubtfully, though my own blood was boiling in my veins.

Whether he heard or not, I do not know, for the next thing I saw was Leo rushing through the gate waving the Khan's sword and shouting at the top of his voice. Then I struck my heels into the ribs of the horse and followed after him. In ten seconds we were among them. As we came, the savages fell back this way and that, staring at us amazed, for at first I think they took us for apparitions. Thus, Leo on foot and I galloping after him, we came to the place.

The executioners and their victim were near the fire now—a very great fire of resinous pine logs built in a pit that measured about eight feet across. Close to it sat the priest upon his stool, watching the scene with a cruel smile, and rewarding the cat with little gobbets of raw meat that he took from a leathern pouch at his side, occupations in which he was so deeply

engaged that he never saw us until we were right on to him.

Shouting: "Leave her alone, you blackguards!" Leo rushed at the executioners, and with a single blow of his sword severed the arm of one of them who gripped the woman by the nape of the neck.

With a yell of pain and rage the man sprang back and stood waving the stump towards the people and staring at it wildly. In the confusion that followed I saw the victim slip from the hands of her astonished would-be murderers and run into the darkness, where she vanished. Also I saw the witch-doctor spring up, still holding the tray on which the cat was sitting, and heard him begin to shout a perfect torrent of furious abuse at Leo, who in reply waved his sword and cursed them roundly in English and many other languages.

Then of a sudden the cat upon the tray, infuriated, I suppose, by the noise and the interruption of its meal, sprang straight at Leo's face. He appeared to catch it in mid-air with his left-hand, and with all his strength dashed it to the ground, where it lay writhing and screeching. Then, as though by an afterthought, he stooped, picked the devilish creature up again, and hurled it into the heart of the fire, for he was mad with rage and knew not what he did.

At the sight of that awful sacrilege—for such it was to them who worshipped this beast—a gasp of horror rose from the spectators, followed by a howl of execration. Then like a wave of the sea they rushed at us. I saw Leo cut one man down, and next instant I was off the horse and being dragged towards the furnace. At the edge of it I met Leo in like plight, but fighting furiously, for his strength was great and they were half afraid of him.

"Why couldn't you leave the cat alone?" I shouted at him in idiotic remonstrance, for my brain had gone, and all I knew was that we were about to be thrown into the fiery pit. Already I was over it; I felt the flames singe my hair and saw its red caverns awaiting me, when of a sudden the brutal hands that held me were unloosened and I fell backwards to the ground, where I lay staring upwards.

This was what I saw. Standing in front of the fire, her draped form quivering as though with rage, was our ghostly looking guide, who pointed with her hand at the gigantic, red-headed witch-doctor. But she was no longer alone, for with her were a score or more of men clad in white robes and armed with swords; black-eyed, ascetic-looking men, with clean-shaved heads and faces, for their scalps shone in the firelight.

At the sight of them terror had seized that multitude, which, mad as goaded bulls but a few seconds before, now fled in every direction like sheep frightened by a wolf. The leader of the white-robed priests, a man with a gentle face, which when at rest was clothed in a perpetual smile, was addressing the medicine-man, and I understood something of his talk.

"Dog!" he said in effect, speaking in a smooth, measured voice that yet was terrible, "accursed dog! beast-worshipper! what were you about to do to the guests of the mighty Mother of the Mountain? Is it for this that you and your idolatries have been spared so long? Answer, if you have anything to say. Answer quickly, for your time is short!"

With a groan of fear the great fellow flung himself upon his knees, not to the head-priest who questioned him, but before the quivering shape of our guide, and to her put up half-articulate prayers for mercy.

"Cease!" said the high-priest; "she is the Minister who judges and the Sword that strikes. I am the Ears and the Voice. Speak and tell me—were you about to cast those men, whom you were commanded to receive hospitably, into yonder fire because they saved the victim of your devilries and killed the imp you cherished? Nay, I saw it all. Know that it was but a trap to catch you, who have been allowed to live too long."

But still the wretch writhed before the draped form and howled for mercy.

"Messenger," said the high priest, "with thee the power goes. Declare thy decree."

Then our guide lifted her hand slowly and pointed to the fire. At once the man turned ghastly white, groaned and fell back—as I think, quite dead, slain by his own terror.

Now many of the people had fled, but some remained, and to these the priest called in cold tones, bidding them approach. They obeyed, creeping towards him.

"Look!" he said, pointing to the man, "look and tremble at the justice of Hes the Mother! Aye, and be sure as it is with him, so shall it be with every one of you who dares to defy her and to practise sorcery and murder. Lift up that dead dog who was your chief."

Some of them crept forward and did his bidding.

"Now cast him into the bed which he had made ready for his victims."

Staggering forward to the edge of the flaming pit, they obeyed, and the great body fell with a crash amongst the burning boughs and vanished there.

"Listen, you people," said the priest, "and learn that this man deserved his dreadful doom. Know you why he purposed to kill that woman whom the strangers saved? Because his familiar marked her as a witch, you think. I tell you it was not so. It was because, she being fair, he would have taken her from her husband, as he had taken many another, and she refused him. But the Eye saw, the Voice spoke, and the Messenger did judgment. He is caught in his own snare; and so shall you be, every one of you who dares to think evil in his heart or to do it with his hands.

"Such is the just decree of the Hesea, spoken by her from her throne amidst the fires of the Mountain."

(*To be continued.*)

DAFFODILS.

TAKE daffodils, from me to you;
For daffodils are fresh and true.
They come from country ways, and know
The after-fragrance of the snow,
And open glances of the sky.

They see quaint folk go passing by:
Old John, and Jill, and Goody-Shoes,
And Marjorie with a heart to lose,
And smocks, and crocks, and trotting sheep,
Sam on his horse's back asleep.

And all who love the open air
And winsome things, and glad, and fair,
And joy that's sweet, and wine that's mellow,
Hail daffodil, all drest in yellow,
For daffodil is kith and kin.

He gathers country secrets in,
And hides within his golden breast
What Phyllis' lips have ne'er confest:
First love, all innocence and dew;
Take daffodils from me to you.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

Concerning "Sucks"

"I merely said: 'Sucks to you!'"

By A Boy Who Suffered One.

THIS is another thing my aunt doesn't know the meaning of. She told me to do something one day, and because she jolly well knew I didn't want to do it, she made up her mind that I wouldn't. (It was to write a letter to a beastly relation.) And when she came prowling along in an hour or two, and found me reading "Stalky," she dropped on me without waiting to ask any questions, and gave me an awful wigging for disobedience and want of family feeling, all in a lump.

I listened to everything she had to say, and when she wasn't able to think of anything else in the way of jabber, I just handed her the letter, beautifully written (though I say it myself) and ready to be posted.

I wasn't going to descend to a lot of mean personalities, as she had done in her abuse of me; so, when I gave it to her, I merely said: "Sucks to you!"—which was brief and to the point.

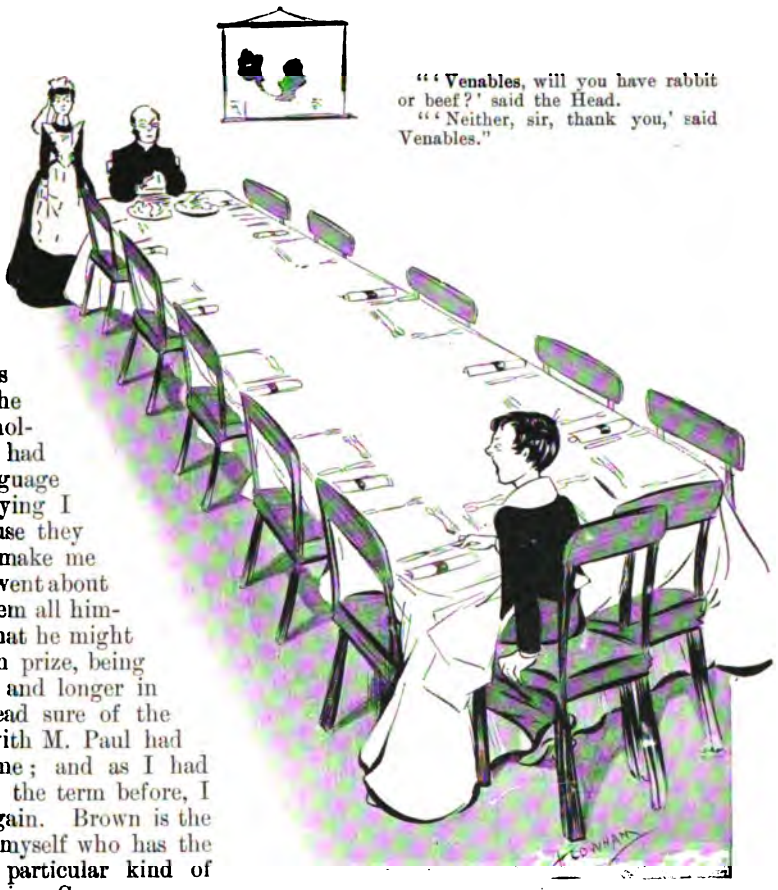
You never saw anyone so badly sold as she was, and still she was too big a silly to know what "sucks" meant, although she had just been given what might be called a practical illustration. She said it sounded disgusting, and that I was a nasty, dirty little wretch; but after having enjoyed the satisfaction of giving her such a gorgeous suck, I didn't care how many names she called me. When one knows one has had the best of it, one can afford to be indifferent to mere exhibitions of temper on the part of one's elders.

At our school we recognise a graduated scale of sucks. It goes like this: "Sucks!" "Double sucks!" "Military sucks!" "Suck Boo!"

"Suck Boo!" is the biggest suck of all, and incomparably the most insulting. It is used only on very important occasions. I have said it myself to Dowson in the cricket-

field, because, as I have already explained, he is an obnoxious rotter, and deserves all the insults that can be heaped on him; but I little thought the time would ever come when Dowson would have a fair chance of saying it to me.

It happened at the mute, inglorious end of last term (I have been reading Gray's "Elegy" in the holidays), and this was the way of it: at the beginning of the term, Cholmondeley and Brown had dared to win the three language prizes. They kept on saying I couldn't do it—not because they believed it, but just to make me mad; and Cholmondeley went about saying he meant to get them all himself. I was half afraid that he might manage to hook the Latin prize, being a good bit older than I, and longer in the class; but I was dead sure of the French, my experiences with M. Paul had been such a help to me; and as I had beaten Brown in German the term before, I thought I could do it again. Brown is the only fellow there except myself who has the least patience with the particular kind of insanity that is embodied in a German grammar, so I am always ready to pay him the compliment of regarding him as a rival.



"'Venables, will you have rabbit or beef?' said the Head.
"'Neither, sir, thank you,' said Venables."

Well, I worked like old boots; and all through the beastly long term I went on steadily creeping ahead of those two. We kept count of our own marks and each other's; and I could see, whenever we compared notes, that Cholmondeley and Brown looked blue and ever bluer (which I think is a quotation, but I'm not sure. It certainly isn't from the "Elegy," but it may be from a hymn), and I was growing more and more pleased with myself and my prospects of success, although, of course, I wasn't such a fool as to let this be apparent. It is in bad taste to crow, even after a final victory; and if you do it too soon, and by any chance come a cropper afterwards, you have merely heaped shame upon your own head.

At last Cholmondeley and Brown pretended that they couldn't remember to keep count of the marks we got in class, and they began to talk about the examinations, which are always made to count for ever so much more than the term's work. At the end of them, the two lots of marks—term's and exam.'s—are added together, and the prizes for each subject given accordingly. The Head says term's marks are of minor importance; but if he thinks so little of them, I don't know why he gives them at all. Anyway, no matter what Chum said or pretended to think, I was quite sure I could do as well at the exams. as through the term, and I was feeling as fit as a fiddle and ready for everything when the blow fell.

I dare say you have, like all properly educated people, read accounts of the Great Plague of London. If you have, you may gain from them some idea of the sweeping nature of the epidemic of influenza which, without a moment's warning, descended upon Everton House at the end of Christmas

term, 1904. In one day half the boarders were in bed. On the second day the other half followed, only one remaining up long enough to stagger in to early dinner.

"Venables, will you have rabbit or beef?" said the Head.

"Neither, sir, thank you," said Venables.

"Go upstairs immediately!" said the Head. "You ought to be in bed already."

He spoke with savage emphasis from the ruins of his hopes that even one had been spared, for the look of the thing.

Then I went home and had it; and all the other day-boys did the same, with the exception of Dowson, who, being a person of no importance, never has anything the matter with him.

A week later I sent to make inquiries, and found that two boys were well enough to return to work; so, as it didn't seem that there was much going on, I took my time.

When I crawled back myself (in a cab), I found that they had all recovered; but the decree had gone forth that there were to be no examinations, and, of course, as a beastly consequence, no prizes.

"The epidemic of influenza which, without a moment's warning, descended upon Everton House."

"Then I went home and had it."

The term's marks were read before we broke up, and I was first in the three languages and second in mathematics. Some may think that this would have been a satisfaction; but I could have borne my fate better if I had been lower down. I can't at this moment recall in full the quotation about the saddest words being "It might have been"; but whatever way the sentiment is put by the author (whose name I have forgotten), it is a sound one and a true. I had never been so badly sucked in all my life.

Neither Cholmondeley nor Brown made any remark about it. They're too well-bred. But that rotter, Dowson, was only too glad to seize his chance of getting even with me; and as we were all going in to the breaking-up tea, he dodged up to me and said, like a sneak, into my ear—

"This seems to me to be a fitting occasion on which to observe 'Suck Boo!'"

MR PILKLEY'S FELONY

BY G·M·BAINES

MR. JOHN PILKLEY was a prominent figure in that well-known and rising watering-place, Pebbleville. He had the right to be considered as such, for he was one of the pioneers of its prosperity. He had found it brick and had made it marble —that is, he had laboured assiduously in the transformation of the one-time quaint little fishing hamlet into a summer resort of ever-increasing popularity, and had hopelessly sophisticated, in the process, a knot of guileless toilers of the sea. He still kept a paternal eye on his *protégé* from his pretentious villa on the East Cliff, though there was a gleam of misgiving in it now, for, with its Métropole, its Grand Hotels, its extended and still extending front, it seemed to Mr. Pilkley that his creation was growing—indeed, it had grown, though he was loth to acknowledge it — beyond the control of his ancient authority.

Time had been when Mr. Pilkley, to use a figure of speech suitable to the locality, had held undisputable possession of the helm in Pebbleville local affairs; but among the rapidly increasing permanent population of the town, others had risen who had shown a strong desire to snatch it from his hand and to steer a totally different course. The chairmanship of the Urban District Council was no longer—as it once had every appearance of being—Mr. Pilkley's by divine right. Mr. Pilkley had to fight for that coveted post now—tooth and nail—and, although he was always much battered and torn, morally and mentally, in the yearly struggle around it, he wasn't invariably successful in gaining it. He was now on the eve of one of these Titanic contests, and about to measure himself against an already proved antagonist, a Mr. Gilbert Belden.

Now, Mr. Pilkley was not of those who can shake hands with an opponent, and then knock him down or be knocked down by him. If he could not make this slight sacrifice to convention before commencing hostilities, it naturally follows that he wouldn't do so afterwards, when smarting and furious from the encounter. Mr. Pilkley was what he called "thorough." This meant, according to his reading of the word, that he considered everybody who opposed him to be a villain, a scoundrel, a liar, and so on, through the whole vocabulary of opprobrium; and as Mr. Belden had met him, and with some success, in the municipal ring, it seems almost need-

less to say that this gentleman's name wasn't to be found on Mr. Pilkley's visiting-list.

Young Frank Pilkley, a law student, Mr. Pilkley's favourite nephew and presumptive heir, often thought that this omission was a matter for regret; and his reason for so thinking was the prettiest by far to be found in Pebbleville, where such "reasons" were plentiful and not ill-looking by any means. It was Margie Belden, the daughter of his uncle's rival. Frank had met her at a little dance after a bazaar in aid of the local Lifeboat Fund, and had surrendered his six feet of manly growth unconditionally, and with the utmost precipitation, to "the dearest, fairest, sweetest little girl"—to quote *some* of his own words, whispered in their subject's tiny ear—that he had ever seen.

The course of true love didn't run smooth in Margie and Frank's case. Mr. Belden didn't fret about it in any way—he was quite agreeably disposed towards Frank's proposal, and, if he had had sole control of the affair, would have made the "course" as placid as a Dutch canal. But Mr. Pilkley obstructed it like a huge boulder, and apparently an immovable one. Apart from his dislike to Mr. Belden—a dislike which, to be "thorough," included all of that ilk—Mr. Pilkley had already, in his own mind, disposed of his nephew matrimonially. He was an old bachelor himself, and intended to remain so until the end of the chapter, but he had his ambitions, and they could be aided by the marriage knot—somebody else's. Frank was to marry Miss Georgina Capper, only daughter of Colonel Capper, C.B., of Cappertown, and one of the pillars of Pebbleville society.

"Look here, sir," cried Mr. Pilkley wrathfully, when Frank had laid bare the tender state of his feelings, with a lack of fluency that argued badly for his chances of the Woolsack, "you're an ass! You won't have my consent to such an idiotic step, and you know what that means. Never! And a Belden, too. Why, that fellow Belden——" He snorted loudly, and then, the stop being well out, he reeled off his usual litany about his rival.

"Surely the Beldens are just as good as we are, sir?" retorted Frank, when his uncle, from lack of breath, gave him an opening. "Neither of our families came over with the Conqueror, and a manufacturing chemist seems to me to be no worse than——"

"That'll do, sir. You mean to insult me, eh? Another word——"

At this stage Mr. Pilkley couldn't utter one, on account of strong apoplectic symptoms manifesting themselves, and Frank daren't. He wasn't a calculating lover, but he didn't see that his cause was to be served by throwing away a substantial allowance for the momentary pleasure of annoying his uncle.

The fact of the matter was that Frank's unfinished speech should have been completed by a reference to the uncle's source of fortune. It is strange that some people shouldn't like to be reminded that they supply their fellow-men with pills, plasters, soap, candles, and other commonplace but necessary articles at a profit to themselves. Mr. Pilkley had the air of a stockbroker or a prosperous merchant, but as far as Pebbleville was concerned he was generally accepted as a gentleman of considerable private means. Nobody suspected that he was the principal of a gigantic Emporium in London, whose mission was to clothe the British citizen and his male offspring, of all ages and sizes, at a phenomenally small cost. Trousers at six and six per pair, and tweed suits complete at a guinea, seemed to be as far removed from Mr. Pilkley as Sirius. He was ashamed of them, perhaps; at any rate, he never wore them himself nor permitted any reference to them outside of the Emporium.

Still, the profits of the Great Clothing Emporium were far from contemptible, and Mr. Pilkley supervised them himself, and with a very watchful eye. He did not go to town every day for that purpose, but from time to time only, and then his absence from Pebbleville would usually extend over a fortnight, while he counted his gains and concerted fresh plans for a new onslaught on the pockets he had already sent forth from his workshops.

It was while engaged in one of these inspections that he received a letter at his chambers from his chief supporter in Pebbleville, Mr. Kettleby. Mr. Kettleby wanted to know, urgently, when Mr. Pilkley could return. It was very desirable that he should do so as soon as possible, in view of the approaching election and the wiles of the Beldenites, who were straining every nerve to secure the return of their chief and a majority of his friends.

After reading this letter, Mr. Pilkley hastily wound up his business at the Emporium and then took the train for Pebbleville. He arrived there about ten o'clock in the evening; but as he wasn't expected—not

having given any notice of his coming—his neat little brougham wasn't in waiting for him at the station.

It didn't matter. It was a glorious summer night. The murmuring sea was like a mill-pond for placidity, and the stars crowded the deep, soft, blue sky with their brilliancy. Music was only "a noise," as usually understood by Mr. Pilkley, but the strains of the distant band on the front, now reaching his ear as he stood for a moment at the station exit, seemed to find something in him that vibrated in unison with them. After the stuffy city, and the stuffier Emporium, reeking with the odours of its countless bales of cloth, the air of Pebbleville seemed to be absolutely intoxicating in its purity and freshness. Mr. Pilkley hadn't a vestige of poetry in his composition; he couldn't clothe his feelings with words as readily as he could have inducted one of his clients with an "unrivalled" suit, but he felt that the influence of the scene was stirring him strangely and pleasantly.

"'Pon my word!" he murmured to himself, after expanding his chest with a deep breath, "our Pebbleville air is wonderful. Makes me feel twenty years younger, I declare. I really believe I could vault that gate," and probably he might have made the attempt, in his lightness of heart, but for the restraining presence of a solitary porter. "I'll go and see Kettleby before I go home," he continued, "and find out what the Belden lot are up to."

Mr. Pilkley adjusted the rosebud in the lapel of his light overcoat, tilted his grey top-hat at a jauntier angle than usual, and bidding the porter, whom he recognised as a voter, a genial "Good night," he swung into a side street, humming what he would have called a tune, and beating time to it on his right leg, with the light cane he was carrying.

He soon arrived at "The Lawns," Mr. Kettleby's residence, and swinging wide the gate, he tripped up the gentle curve of the carriage-drive towards the front door.

Those whom the gods destroy they first madden. Surely Mr. Pilkley had been marked out for sacrifice, if his conduct at that moment may be taken as a proof. So much jubilation was uncanny in a man of his age. Instead of proceeding sedately to the door, as befitted one of the leading citizens of Pebbleville, he halted suddenly, stopped his hum, hum, hum, smote his thigh with a smart and final flick of his cane, and then emitted a really foolish chuckle.

One of the drawing-room windows of the

"Margie Belden."

house was partially open—that was all, and at any other time Mr. Pilkley would have passed it unnoticed. But that yawning gap between sash and sill, at this particular moment, had a glamour, a fascination, a power that took an instantaneous and entire possession of him.

"A pretty thing this!" he soliloquised, under that mysterious influence. "Here's Kettleby, now, just offering a premium to burglars. On the Watch Committee, too! He ought to know better. 'Pon my word! I've a mind to—to 'have him on a line,' as Frank would say. Why not? It's so easy."

The idea was simply irresistible, and Mr. Pilkley yielded to it without even the semblance of a struggle. His judgment of the fitness of things was gone—swept away. The fatal incongruity between the deed he was about to perform, and himself, the performer, never seemed to strike that unhappy man.

On the contrary, he was smiling serenely, as if amateur burgling of his friend's premises was his ordinary pastime. He deposited his hat and cane at the side of the gravel path, and then advancing to the window, carefully raised it to a height that would accommodate a respectable girth. A moment later he seated himself on the low sill, lightly swung his pearl-grey clad legs over it, and then followed them into the room.

Mr. Pilkley did not advance far. It was not his intention to make a big haul. A small piece of portable property would suit his purpose admirably, so he groped around stealthily and cautiously in the darkness. Almost immediately his hands encountered and closed upon something movable. He couldn't tell exactly what the article was, but, judging by his sense of touch, it must be a vase, or jar, or something of the kind. He would have preferred something smaller —something he could have slipped into a pocket of his light overcoat, but the sudden sound of footsteps and voices in the room overhead decided him. Tightening his grasp round his booty, he recrossed the sill into the garden—noiselessly, but with considerable, very considerable, precipitation, in fact.

The grey light confused him, after the darkness he had just emerged from. Where had he put his hat and stick? He found them by the simple process of stumbling over them, which did his hat no good. He muttered softly to himself, as he replaced his head-covering in such haste as to prevent his noticing the dent that took all the respectability out of it, and which his unwary foot had made.

Now, if Mr. Pilkley had been allowed, say, two short minutes, for calm deliberation, at this juncture, all would have been well with him. But it is presumable that even burgling in jest must have some effect on the nerves—especially so in the first essay. Then, too, Mr. Pilkley was conscious of a vague suspicion in his mind—rapidly crystallising into a dead certainty—that he was making a considerable fool of himself. Consequently the condition of Mr. Pilkley's nerves and feelings, *plus* the sudden clatter of the entrance-gate, and the loud crunching of approaching footsteps on the gravel of the drive, made an abject coward of the poor man. He stole on tiptoe across the path and, ensconcing himself in the shrubbery, waited anxiously for the new-comer to pass.

Who was it? Kettleby? No; for Kettleby didn't smoke, and the perfume of a cigar proclaimed that this person must be a visitor.

A dark figure turned the curve, came nearer, and then paused closely opposite him, as he knelt, very uncomfortably, on a freshly watered bed, behind a far too exiguous clump of laurels. He was discovered. He waited, in a seething stupor, for the command to give himself up, but still it did not come. Instead of it, Mr. Pilkley received another shock. The silhouette struck a fresh match for its cigar, and in the feeble glare of it, Mr. Pilkley recognised, with a thrill of horror, his arch-enemy, Belden.

Good Heavens! Belden! Figuratively, his heart was in his boots, although, in point of fact, it was thumping like a sledge-hammer against his ribs. It made him giddy to think of the peril he had just escaped. Had he escaped it? Had he? Why—why, if Belden discovered him in his present position, Pebbleville would instantly become more uncomfortable, as a place of residence, than the hottest spot on the Equator. The vase—yes, and himself, too, as a superlative idiot—twenty—a hundred times!

In the meantime, Mr. Belden, unconscious that the satisfactory solution of the local election question, as far as he was concerned, was actually within his grasp, as also the equally satisfactory settlement of many minor points of difference between himself and Mr. Pilkley, passed on and entered the house.

Mr. Pilkley breathed a little more freely now that the extreme tension of the last few moments was relaxed. He rose slowly and cautiously—painfully, too—from his constrained position and straightened his back —ugh! how it ached!—preparatory to beating a retreat.

Clearly he couldn't call on Kettleby now. That was out of the question, even if that fellow Belden were not there. And the vase? What should he do with it? Leave the confounded thing in the shrubbery? Putting it back was not to be thought of; not for a king's ransom would Mr. Pilkley approach that drawing-room window again. He eyed the vase in the gloom, and the aversion for it that rose in his breast was unbounded, incalculable.

He was about to place the thing on the ground and steal away when his ear caught the sounds of laughter and talking in the hall of the house. He started erect again.

Somebody was coming out this time, surely. This would never do. Detection was inevitable.

Mr. Pilkley wholly lost the grip of his slowly returning self-possession at this point, but his fingers closed convulsively and unconsciously over the fatal vase. One moment he stood in hesitation, every sense on the strain. Then, somehow—he wasn't particular—he reached the path, though a spiteful rose-bush tried hard to detain him, and failing, ripped the sleeve of his overcoat sadly. He walked on gingerly over the gravel, treating every grain of it he trod on as though it were red hot, still carrying in his hand—and unknown to himself, so acute was his trepidation—the vase.

Oh! how dearly he would have liked to break into a run! His legs were quivering and demanding rapid action, but there were two powerful reasons against his doing so. The first, that he was afraid of making too much noise on that awful gravel; the second, that his breathing apparatus seemed to be upset by his excitement. The sudden opening of the front door, though he expected it, startled him like a well-applied pin-prick. Then the rapid sound of footsteps rang out behind him. He was being overtaken, and the gate—the other side of it his salvation—was still yards distant from him.

"The silhouette struck a fresh match for its cigar."

He turned in sheer desperation, and the next moment met his nephew, face to face.

"Uncle!"

"Frank!"

"A — a — I thought I saw someone going towards the gate, and then turn back. Must have been mistaken. Didn't expect you to-night, sir," said Frank, who had his own reasons for feeling a little confused by this meeting.

"No? Ahum, ahum!" Mr. Pilkley tried to clear his dry throat and to think of what he was going to say next. "Fact is," he went on, "I intended calling, and—

er—er—ahem—er—changed my mind. A—ahem!"

"Going to call?" asked Frank, with a start. "Why not go in now, uncle?" he added, and he turned suggestively.

"Well—er—er—no. No; I think not, as—er—er—I've met you, you see. Er—to-morrow will do," objected Mr. Pilkley very hurriedly. "We'll go up to East Cliff together. Come along."

"Very well, sir. I'm ready, and was just going. What's that you're carrying? A parcel? Let me——"

"Parcel?" Mr. Pilkley looked down. "Ah! Oh!" and then he became aware that that infernal vase was still in his possession. He thought he had left it in the shrubbery. How had this come about? Before he had recovered from the shock it had given him, Frank had withdrawn it from his resistless grasp. Then he burst out—

"Here, here, Frank. Throw—throw that thing away into the—the shrubbery," he stuttered eagerly; "it's no good."

Frank was near the gate now, which he was about to open for their exit. He turned in surprise.

"Eh! What did you——" he began, and then stopped dead in the throes of an infinitely greater astonishment.

The pair were now within the radius of the street lamp, and Frank, with his back to the light, had the full benefit of it as it fell upon his uncle. It was not very powerful, but what there was of it was relentless, for it made instantly and hideously conspicuous the considerable dent in the high-hat, the soiled trousers-knees, to which a portion of Mr. Kettleby's damp flower-bed was still adhering, and even the rent made in the sleeve of the light overcoat by the detaining rose-bush was visible.

The spectacle was a bewildering one to Frank, but somehow it seemed to link itself very naturally with the vision of a copious civic dinner and unlimited champagne that instantly flashed across his brain. Certainly Mr. Pilkley had never shown any symptom of that or any other human frailty before; but isn't it the unexpected that always happens? What else could explain the meaning of that agitated face, damaged attire, and eccentric behaviour? "Throw away the vase!" was a bad sign—very bad. His uncle would require careful management.

"Looks like real Indian, sir," said Frank, pretending a critical examination of the vase. "It must be valuable." Then suggestively: "You got it for the bazaar, sir, eh?"

"Bazaar—ah, yes, yes, of course, the bazaar," replied Mr. Pilkley, promptly clutching at the idea his nephew had supplied, and improving it, he concluded that his command to throw the vase away had not been understood. "Miss Capper asked me to er—er—pick up a few things for her," he concluded, with a tolerable effort to speak carelessly.

"Christie's, sir?" Frank queried, with a well-simulated show of interest.

"No, I—er—I got this—er—er—cheap—from a friend, in fact," which was strictly true. "Confound it all!" he added peevishly, "can't you put the thing down and let us be going?"

Frank opened the gate at once, and the pair passed through. As they turned on the side-walk, Frank offered his arm to his uncle.

"Eh? What's this?" Mr. Pilkley glowered inquiringly at his nephew. "No, thanks; I'm not ill," he said gruffly, and walked on in silence.

For some time Frank strode on with his uncle, narrowly but unostentatiously observing him. Certainly Mr. Pilkley's mode of walking left nothing to be desired; it was absolutely normal. Frank then began to debate with himself whether he should continue to feign an entire ignorance, or break, as delicately as possible, to his uncle the condition of his overcoat, trousers, and hat. Mr. Pilkley seemed to be blissfully unaware of any damage to his clothing.

"If I let the old boy go through the streets like the guy he is at present, he'll be as mad as a hatter with me when he finds it out," Frank thought in his indecision. "And if I tell him what an awful spectacle he is, he'll have a fit. It beats me what he's been doing with himself. I hope he won't think of leaving this precious piece of pottery at the Colonel's now—though, by the way, I fancy they were going out. I'll try him. If he does, I *must* tell him about his clothes."

"I suppose you don't intend to stop at Colonel's Capper's with the vase, sir?" he asked. "The Colonel said something to me about going to Major Harnesse's."

"Oh, hang the vase!" snapped Mr. Pilkley. "Can't you find anything else to talk about?" and he eyed the article, as Frank swung it in his hand, with a glance of intense loathing. "What makes you think I want to see the Colonel?" he continued. "The only person I wished to see to-night was Kettleby; but, as——"

"Well, we are just in front of his place now," Frank broke in; "but I feel pretty certain he isn't in at this moment—sure of it, in fact. Come along, sir."

"You don't appear to have grasped what I was saying," Mr. Pilkley replied severely, as he stopped on the pathway and looked gloomily at Frank. "I repeat that the only person I wished to see to-night was Kettleby—Ket-tle-by. Have I made my meaning plain, or not?"

"Yes, yes; I understand you perfectly, sir."

"Then don't interrupt me—please. I meant to call on him, and changed my mind, as you saw——"

"Oh—h!" interjected Frank doubtfully.

"Confound your ah-ing and oh-ing! You appear to be wool-gathering!" cried Mr. Pilkley with much asperity.

"No, I'm not," retorted Frank sturdily. "You told me you were not going to call at 'The Lawns'—that's all you said—I'll swear."

"Well?" sneered Mr. Pilkley crushingly. "Well?"

"And when you mentioned Kettleby just now, I said we were in front of his place, and I didn't think he was in—that's all, I think."

"In front of his place?" Mr. Pilkley looked at the house Frank was indicating. "Now, what the deuce do you mean?"

"Only what I say," Frank replied calmly. "We appear to have been at cross-purposes. If Kettleby hadn't moved up here before you went to town, the whole thing is explained. H'm—let me think."

Mr. Pilkley looked up at Frank vacantly for a moment or two, and his hand reached for and tightened round the iron railing close at his side. A horrible suspicion was dawning in his brain, and a cold perspiration exuding on his forehead.

"Kettleby—moved—up—here. Then—then, who lives at 'The Lawns'?" he asked weakly.

Frank felt his face burn hotly as he replied: "The Beldens, sir—and now I'm in for it," he added inwardly.

Mr. Pilkley groped slowly at his breast-pocket for his handkerchief. "The Beldens!" he repeated huskily after a pause. "Good Heavens!"

At that moment a figure rapidly approached, swung by them, stopped, turned, and then slapped the dazed Mr. Pilkley forcibly on the shoulder. It was Mr. Kettleby.

"Why, Pilkley, I thought it must be you. You're the very man I wanted to see. How do, Frank?" he said briskly. "You got my letter, of course?" addressing Mr. Pilkley senior. "Come in. I've got some important news for you—very important."

"I'm—I'm—not well," stammered Mr. Pilkley. "To-morrow—er—er—to-morrow."

"Why, what's the matter with you?" Mr. Kettleby asked, as he looked more closely. "What the dickens has happened to your hat—and your coat, too?" For the moment, the state of Mr. Pilkley's knees was not apparent to him.

Mr. Pilkley looked stupidly from his head-covering, which Mr. Kettleby had removed, to the rent in his sleeve, and back again.

"I—I—had—an—an attack—I think," he said faintly.

Mr. Kettleby, with a vague suspicion that some heated Beldenites had assaulted Mr. Pilkley, turned to Frank for an explanation, but Frank was no longer there. Frank had seen his opportunity for withdrawing while Mr. Kettleby was in the first grip of his astonishment, and had availed himself of it. He felt instinctively that the situation was a delicate one, and that his uncle would prefer to explain it in his own way, and his—Frank's—presence might be embarrassing. As he said to himself: "I'll give the old boy a chance to tell his own tale, varnished or unvarnished, just as it suits him—and I've got an idea that he'll have to allow himself a *leetle* latitude. Oh, my hat!" he chuckled, "shall I ever forget his face when he found he'd nearly strolled into Belden's in mistake? It's positively too killing—I must tell Margie the joke.

"And he bought this for Miss Georgina, eh?" he continued, as he looked at the vase. "And then he wanted to pitch it into the shrubbery—uncommon queer behaviour of his. At first I thought it was champagne; now I don't know what to think. How did he get so battered and torn? Heavens! it's a complete puzzle. Give it up.

"I shall catch it—just—about the Beldens," he went on after a pause. "He'll be at me hot and strong again, *in re* Miss Georgie. Why don't he marry her himself? She's old enough, by Jove! I shan't—no, not if he cuts me off with a shilling, and I have to wear his 'special values' at six and six for the rest of my days. It's Margie, dear little Margie, for me, or nobody. Hang Miss Georgie!"

"Hallo! That you, Frank? You're in a desperate hurry."

Frank started and instinctively raised his hat. He had been so deeply engrossed in his soliloquy that he had not perceived Colonel Capper, arm-in-arm with his fair daughter. They were just returning from Major Harnesse's, and were walking leisurely

back to Bhurtpore Cottage, the Colonel's residence, close at hand.

"How do, Colonel?" replied Frank, as he halted. "Good evening, Miss Capper. Delightful weather, isn't it?"

"Ah! you've been playing truant, sir," replied the Colonel gaily. "We thought you'd promised the Harnesses—didn't we, Georgie? Been shopping instead, eh?" and the Colonel pointed with his cane at the vase. "What's that thing?"

Frank laughed as he held up the vase before him for the Colonel to see.

"Oh, no; *I* haven't been shopping. This is my uncle's purchase, Colonel." And then he continued incautiously: "He told me he had bought it to give to Miss Capper for the bazaar——"

Miss Capper had been wearing an air of patient boredom until the mention of her name in conjunction with a present. She now became interested. The Colonel adjusted his monocle, took out a cigarette, and, as he struck a match, looked at the vase more closely.

"Looks good," he acknowledged. "Very kind of Pilkley—eh, Georgie?"

Miss Capper immediately unclasped her hands from her father's arm and took the vase from Frank.

"Oh! how nice of him! Please strike another match, papa." The Colonel struck one, and Miss Capper turned the vase round critically, just as Frank had done not long before, in its light, emitting little purrs of delight in the process.

"Real old Indian, papa, dear. Superb! Splendid! There isn't a better specimen at Cappertown. How very nice of your uncle, Mr. Pilkley! *Do* thank him *so* much for me until I see him myself, you know."

Miss Capper had evidently taken possession of the vase permanently. Frank was rather nonplussed at this development. He had some doubt of its being in his uncle's programme, and hastened to say so.

"Perhaps my uncle intended to have the pleasure of presenting the vase to you himself, Miss Capper. He would be wild—he wouldn't like to be forestalled like this, I'm perfectly sure. Shall I take it?" He stretched out his hands suggestively.

"Oh, dear, dear, no! I couldn't think of parting with it again, really. I shudder to think of the careless way you were carrying such a treasure," Miss Capper replied, smiling sweetly. "Besides, here we are at home, and I am positively dying to examine it in a better light. Won't you come in? Do," she added.

"Thanks, very much," he said aloud; "but I really couldn't come"; and wishing the Colonel and Miss Capper "Good night," he hurried off to East Cliff House and bed.

* * * * *

About eight o'clock the next morning Frank was awakened by a loud knocking at his door.

"Come in!" he shouted, and Craddock, his uncle's butler and general handy-man, entered with a disturbed face. Frank looked at him apprehensively from his pillow.

"For 'Evin's sake, please get up at once, Master Frank!" said Craddock hurriedly. "Your uncle is rampagin' about the house in his dressin'-gown somethin' awful, since I took up his letters and papers. He's sent me trapesin' all over the house for a vase I don't know from Adam. And now he wants you at once. Shall I send for Dr. Mole? There's something radickly wrong with your uncle, I'm sure."

"Don't be a fool!" said Frank, springing up in bed. "He'll be all right as soon as I see him. Where is he now?"

"Rampin' up and down in the dinin'-room, sir. Please don't be long," implored Craddock, as he withdrew.

Frank made a hurried toilet, endeavouring, as he went through it, to formulate some scheme of tactics for meeting his uncle's attack. Mr. Pilkley, he felt, was about to assail him with horse, foot, and artillery. The next quarter of an hour promised to be an eventful one. One thing was certain: if his uncle began to bully him about his—Frank's—visit to the Beldens, he should tell him, cost what it might, of his unalterable devotion to Margie.

He found his uncle pacing rapidly to and fro, unshaven, and in his dressing-gown, a newspaper crushed nearly to a ball in his right hand, his brows knitted and his face twitching angrily.

"Where's that vase I entrusted to your care last night, sir?" he asked, without any preamble. "Produce it at once," he commanded, as if Frank were a conjurer.

"I can't, uncle. The fact is——"

"Oh, you've dropped it; broke it, eh?" said Mr. Pilkley hurriedly, and with an evident air of relief.

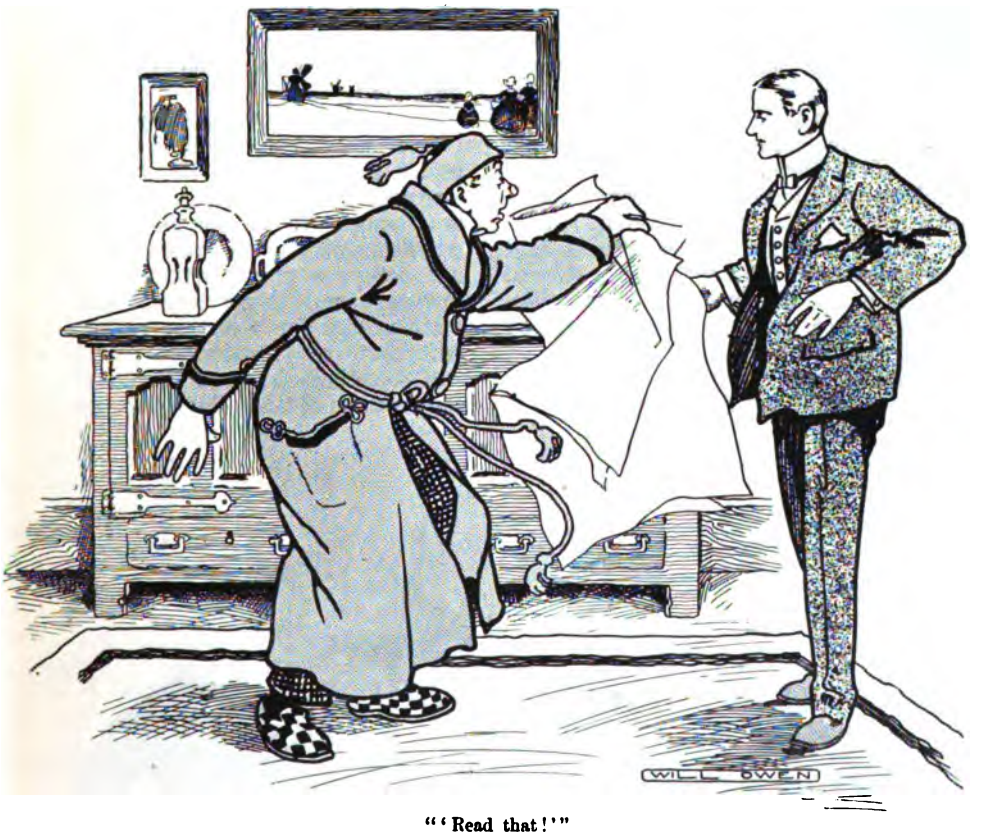
"No, no. I was going to say that Miss Capper had it. It happened like this——"

Frank paused, for his uncle had slowly fallen back into a chair and was glaring fixedly at him. Then Mr. Pilkley suddenly

sprang to his feet again with an energy that startled his nephew.

"You'll have to get it back!" he cried. "Go! Now, and—and—my compliments to Miss Capper, and I must have the vase at once. I—I—want it—it's a—a matter of vital importance. Go on! Quick!"

"I tried my best to keep it last night. It's of no earthly use my asking her again," urged Frank, and he recounted what had happened.



"'Read that!'"

"Heavens and earth! you've ruined me," his uncle cried. "I can't hold up my head in Pebbleville again. Here, here," he said desperately, as he unrolled the newspaper with his trembling fingers, and indicated a paragraph, as he thrust the sheet into Frank's hand. "Read that!"

It was the Pebbleville *Daily Courier*, and Frank read the following, under a staring headline of "Daring Robbery":—

"Last evening a daring robbery was effected at 'The Lawns,' now tenanted by a prominent town-councillor, Mr. Gilbert Belden. The Watch Committee have already requisitioned the services of a detective from Scotland Yard, and it is confidently hoped that the burglar may be promptly traced and captured. It appears, from the footmarks found below the drawing-room, that an entry was made through one of the windows. At present, no further loss than that of a valuable Indian vase can be detected. It is presumed that the thief was disturbed in his depredations, which are supposed to have been about the very unusual hour of ten. This is a palpable proof to us that the provisions made by Mr. Pilkley and his Tammany-ring of friends are glaringly and shamefully inadequate for the protection of the inhabitants of Pebbleville and their property," etc., etc.

Frank looked down at his uncle, who was mopping his face feverishly with his handkerchief.

"Is—is this the same vase, sir?" he asked doubtfully.

"Yes, of course it is—the cursed thing!"

Mr. Pilkley groaned. "It promises to be the ruin—and—and death of me."

"But—but—I don't——"

"Oh, what's the good of but—buting? I took it," he said simply. "There!"

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated Frank, retreating a step. "*You*, uncle? Impossible! You're joking."

"Joking? I thought I was. No more 'joking' for me. I can't imagine, for the life of me, why I was such an ass," he sighed despondently. "No, sir, I *hadn't* been drinking," he continued sharply. "I was under the impression that idiot Kettleby was still living there, and—and—good Heavens! don't stand staring at me like a gaby. What's to be done? Don't you see things can't remain in this state? You're a lawyer. Let's have an opinion—sharp."

A long consultation now ensued which tried Frank's risible muscles severely. After many arguments, protests, complaints, and heated language from his uncle, Frank offered, himself, to see the matter through satisfactorily at once, and he pledged his head on the success of his plan.

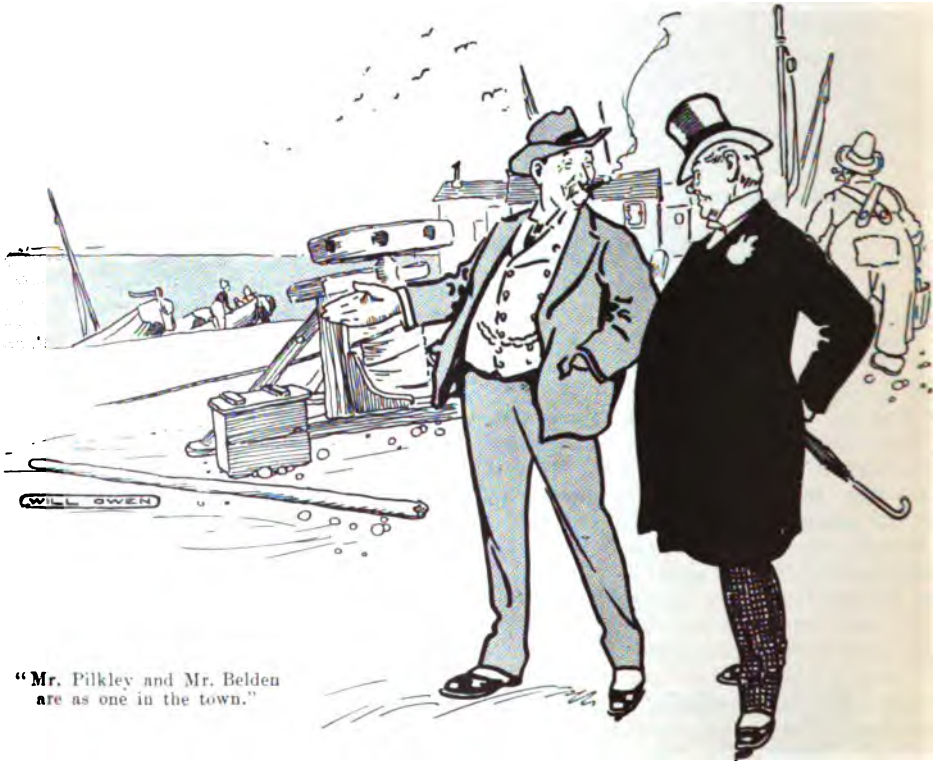
Mr. Pilkley was forced to consent. His choice of alternatives was Hobson's.

"But Belden is a scoundrel," he repeated for the hundredth time, as Frank was starting on his mission. "You'll see—mark my words—he'll sell me when a good opportunity occurs——"

"Well, there's one way of effectually gagging him," Frank said. "Look here, sir," he continued boldly, "if you'll only consent to my marrying Margie—Miss Belden, you know—*we'll* answer for his silence, complete and absolute—there!"

The answer that Frank obtained to his offer may be deduced from the present state of local matters in Pebbleville. Mr. Pilkley and Mr. Belden are as one in the town—and irresistible.

Frank made a point of purchasing the vase as soon as the bazaar was opened, and paid a good long price for it to Miss Capper ungrudgingly. It is considered by Margie and himself to be one of their chiefest treasures, and is prized accordingly. It does not occupy a prominent position in their drawing-room, its associations being somewhat painful for a certain visitor; but to particular—very particular—friends, Frank will sometimes be prevailed upon to show the proceeds of "Mr. Pilkley's felony."



"Mr. Pilkley and Mr. Belden are as one in the town."

THE SLUM CAT.

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON,*

Author of "Wild Animals I Have Known," "Two Little Savages," etc.

LIFE I.

LITTLE Slum Kitten was not six weeks old yet, but she was alone in the old junk-yard. Her mother had gone to seek food among the garbage-boxes the night before, and had never returned; so when the second evening came, she was very hungry. A deep-laid instinct drove her forth from the old cracker-box to seek something to eat. Feeling her way silently among the rubbish, she smelt everything that seemed eatable, but without finding food. At length she reached the wooden steps leading down into Jap Malee's bird-store underground at the far end of the yard. The door was open a little, and she walked in. A negro sitting idly on a box in a corner watched her curiously. She wandered past some rabbits; they paid no heed. She came to a wide-barred cage in which was a fox. He crouched low; his eyes glowed. The Kitten wandered, sniffing, up to the bars, put her head in, sniffed again, then made straight towards the feed-pan, to be seized in a flash by the crouching fox. She gave a frightened "Mew!" and the negro also sprang forward, with such sudden vigour that the fox dropped the Kitten and returned to the corner, there to sit blinking his eyes in sullen fear.

The negro pulled the Kitten out. She tottered in a circle a few times, then revived, and a few minutes later, when Jap Malee came back, she was purring in the negro's lap, apparently none the worse.

Jap was not an Oriental: he was a full-blooded Cockney; but his eyes were such little accidental slits aslant in his round, flat face that his first name was forgotten in the highly descriptive title of "Jap." He was not especially unkind to the birds and beasts which furnished his living, but he did not want the Slum Kitten.

The negro gave her all the food she could eat, and then carried her to a distant block and dropped her in an iron-yard. Here she lived and somehow found food enough to grow till, weeks later, an extended exploration brought her back to her old quarters in the junk-yard, and, glad to be at home, she at once settled down.

* * * * *

Kitty was now full grown. She was a striking-looking cat of the tiger type. Her marks were black on a pale grey, and the four beauty spots of white on nose, ears, and tail-tip lent a certain distinction. She was expert now at getting a living, yet she had some days of starvation, and had so far failed in her ambition to catch a sparrow. She was quite alone, but a new force was coming into her life.

She was lying in the sun one September day when a large black cat came walking along the top of a wall in her direction. By his torn ear she recognised him at once as an old enemy. She slunk into her box and hid. He picked his way gingerly, bounded lightly to a shed that was at the end of the yard, and was crossing the roof when a yellow cat rose up. The black tom glared and growled; so did the yellow tom. Their tails lashed from side to side. Strong throats growled and yowled. They approached with ears laid back, with muscles a-tense.

"Yow—yow—ow!" said the black one.

"Wow—w—w——!" was the slightly deeper answer.

"Ya—wow—wow—wow——!" said the black one, edging up an inch nearer.

"Yow—w—w——!" was the yellow answer, as the blond cat rose to full height and stepped with vast dignity a whole inch forward. "Yow—w!" and he went another inch, while his tail went swish—thump—from one side to the other.

"Ya—wow—yow—w!" screamed the black in a rising tone, and he backed the eighth of

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an inch as he marked the broad, unshrinking breast before him.

Windows opened all around, human voices were heard, but the cat scene went on.

"Yow—yow—ow!" rumbled the yellow peril, his voice deepening as the other's rose. "Yow!" and he advanced another step.

Now their noses were but three inches apart; they stood sidewise, both ready to clinch, but each waiting for the other. They glared at each other for three minutes in silence, and like statues, except that each tail-tip was twisting.

* * * * *

The yellow began again. "Yow—ow—ow!" in deep tone.

"Ya-a-a-a-a!" screamed the black, with intent to strike terror by his yell, but he retreated one-sixteenth of an inch. The yellow walked up a whole long inch; their whiskers were mixing now; another advance, and their noses almost touched.

"Yo—w—w!" said Yellow, like a deep moan.

"Ya-a-a-a-a!" screamed Black, but he retreated a thirty-second of an inch, and the yellow warrior closed and clinched like a demon.

Oh, how they rolled and bit and tore—especially the yellow one!

How they pitched and gripped and hugged—but especially the yellow one!

Over and over, sometimes one on top, sometimes the other, but usually the yellow one, and over they rolled till off the roof, amid cheers from all the windows. They lost not a second in that fall into the junk-yard; they tore and clawed all the way down, but especially the yellow one; and when they struck the ground, still fighting, the one on top was chiefly the yellow one; and before they separated both had had as much as they wanted, especially the black one! He scaled the wall, and, bleeding and growling, disappeared, while the news was passed from window to window that Cayley's "Nig" had been licked by "Orange Billy."

Either the yellow cat was a very clever seeker, or else Slum Kitty did not hide very hard, for he discovered her among the boxes; and she made no attempt to get away, probably because she had witnessed the fight. There is nothing like success in warfare to win the female heart, and thereafter the yellow tom and Kitty became very good friends, not sharing each other's lives or food—cats do not do that much—but recognising each other as entitled to special friendly privileges.

When October's shortening days were on, an event took place in the old cracker-box. If "Orange Billy" had come, he would have seen five little kittens curled up in the embrace of their mother, the little Slum Kitty. It was a wonderful thing for her. She felt all the elation an animal mother can feel—all the delight—as she tenderly loved them and licked them.

She had added a joy to her joyless life, but she had also added a heavy burden. All her strength was taken now to find food. And one day, led by a tempting smell, she wandered into the bird-cellar and into an open cage. Everything was still, there was meat ahead, and she reached forward to seize it; the cage door fell with a snap, and she was a prisoner. That night the negro put an end to the kittens, and was about to do the same with the mother, when her unusual markings attracted the attention of the bird-man, who decided to keep her.

LIFE II.

JAP MALEE was as disreputable a little Cockney bantam as ever sold cheap canary birds in a cellar. He was extremely poor, and the negro lived with him because the "Henglishman" was willing to share bed and board. Jap was perfectly honest according to his lights, but he had no lights, and there is little doubt that his chief revenue was derived from storing and restoring stolen dogs and cats. The fox and the half-a-dozen canaries were mere blinds. The "Lost and Found" columns of the papers were the only ones of interest to Jap, but he noticed and saved a clipping about breeding for fur. This was stuck on the wall of his den, and under its influence he set about making an experiment with the Slum Cat. First he soaked her dirty fur with stuff to kill the two or three kinds of creepers she wore, and when it had done its work he washed her thoroughly. Kitty was savagely indignant, but a warm and happy glow spread over her as she dried off in a cage near the stove, and her fur began to fluff out with wonderful softness and beauty. Jap and his assistant were much pleased. But this was preparatory. "Nothing is so good for growing fur as plenty of oily food and continued exposure to cold weather," said the clipping. Winter was at hand, and Jap Malee put Kitty's

"The black tom glared and growled; so did the yellow tom."

cage out in the yard, protected only from the rain and the direct wind, and fed her with all the oil-cake and fish-heads she could eat. In a week the change began to show. She was rapidly getting fat. She had nothing to do but get fat and dress her fur. Her cage was kept clean, and Nature responded to the chill weather and oily food by making Kitty's coat thicker and glossier every day, so that by Christmas she was an unusually beautiful cat in the fullest and finest of fur, with markings that were at least a rarity.

Why not send the Slum Cat to the show now coming on?

"'Twon't do, ye kneow, Sammy, to henter 'er as a tramp cat, ye kneow," Jap observed to his help; "but it kin be arranged to suit the Knickerbockers. Nothink like a good noime, ye kneow. Ye see now, it had orter be 'Royal' something or other—nothink goes with the Knickerbockers like 'Royal' anythink. Now, 'Royal Dick' or 'Royal Sam': 'ows that? But 'owld on: them's tom names. Oi say, Sammy, wot's the noime of that island where you were born?"

"Analostan Island, sah, was my native vicinity, sah."

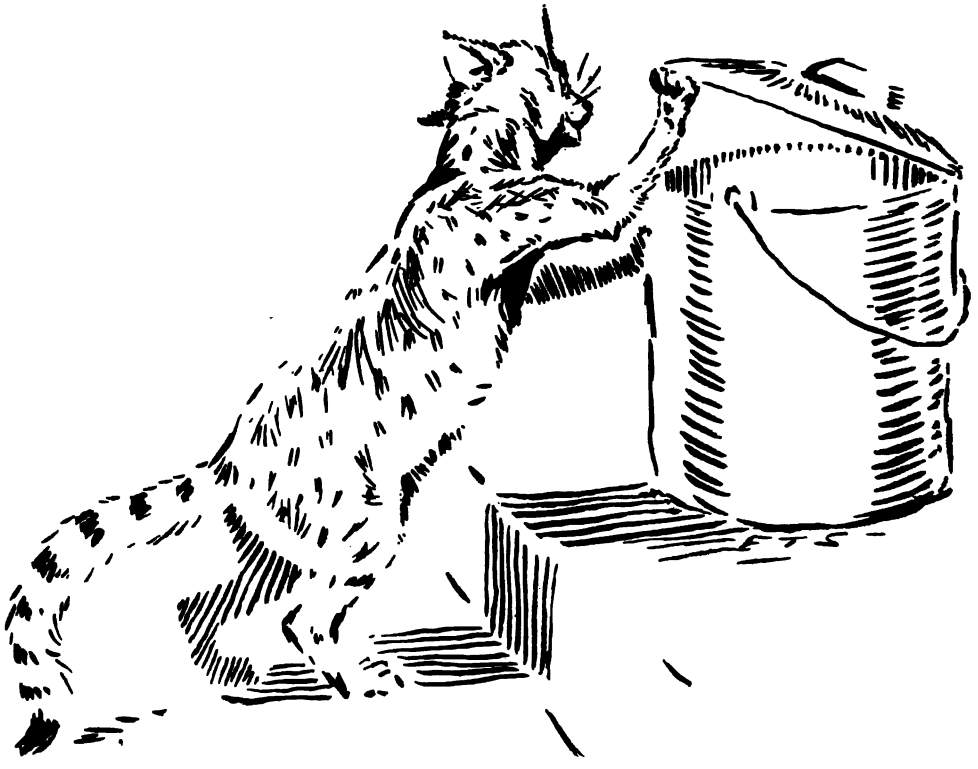
"Oi say, now, that's good, ye kneow. 'Royal Analostan,' by Jove! The onliest pedigreed Royal Analostan in the howle sheow, ye kneow. Ain't that capital?" and they mingled their cackles.

"But we'll 'ave to 'ave a pedigree, ye kneow"; so a very long fake pedigree on the recognised lines was prepared.

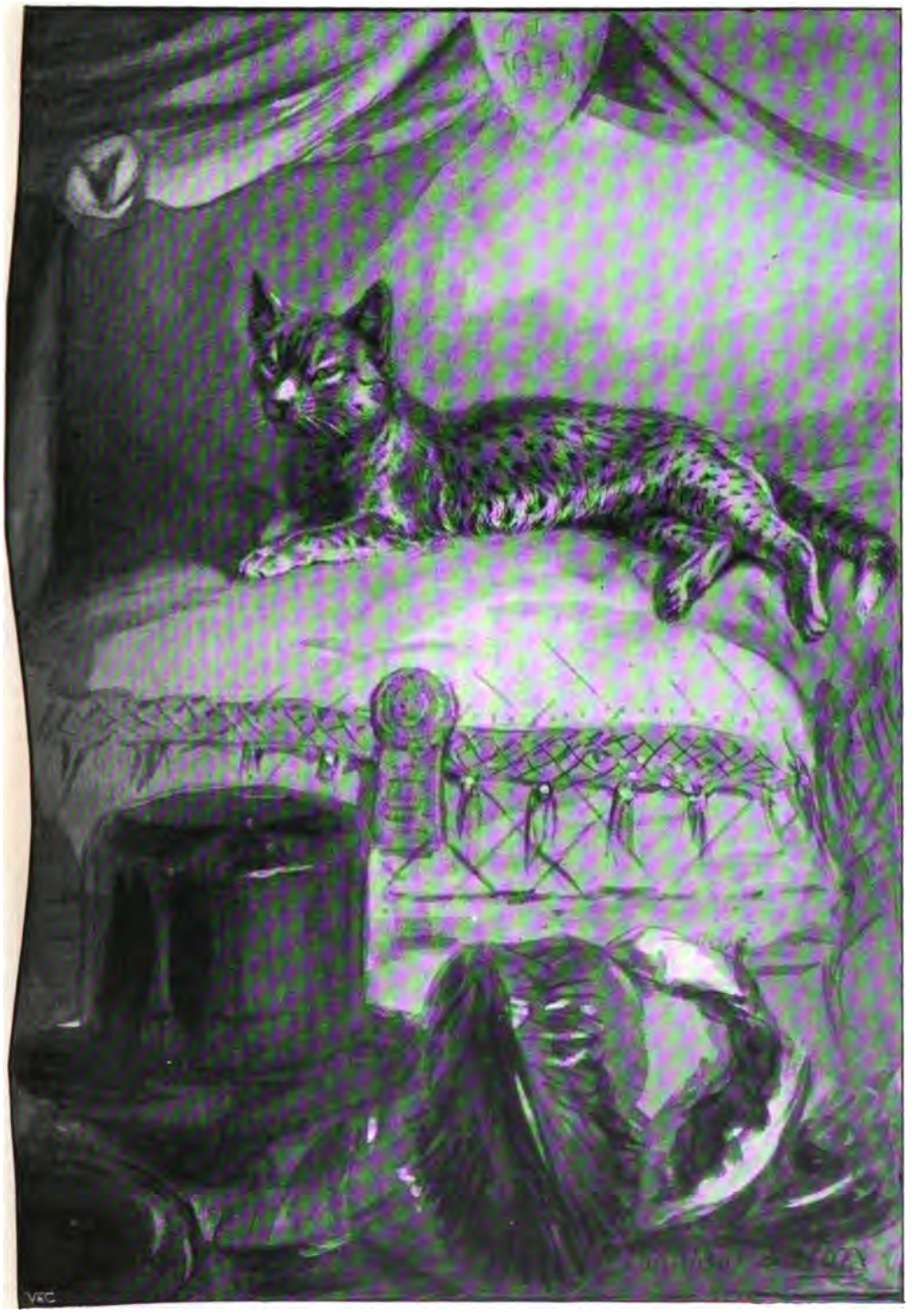
* * * * *

One afternoon Sam, in a borrowed silk hat, delivered the Cat and the pedigree at the show door. He had been a barber, and he could put on more pomp in five minutes than Jap Malee could have displayed in a lifetime, and this, doubtless, was one reason for the respectful reception awarded the Royal Analostan at the cat show.

Jap had all a Cockney's reverence for the upper class. He was proud to be an exhibitor, but when, on the opening day, he went to the door, he was overpowered to see the array of carriages and silk hats. The gateman looked at him sharply, but passed him on his ticket, doubtless taking him for a stable-boy to some exhibitor. The hall had velvet carpets before the long rows of cages. Jap was sneaking down the side row, glancing



"She would get the cover off a milk-can."



"High in a gilded cage on velvet cushions was his Slum Kitty."

at the cats of all kinds, noting the blue ribbons and the reds, glancing about, but not daring to ask for his own exhibit, inwardly

"Frequent wallowings in the garbage-pail."

trembling to think what the gorgeous gathering of fashion would say if they discovered the trick he was playing on them. But he saw no sign of Slum Kitty.

In the middle of the centre aisle were the high-class cats. A great throng was there. The passage was roped, and two policemen were there to keep the crowd moving. Jap wriggled in among them: he was too short to see over, but he gathered from the remarks that the gem of the show was there.

"Oh, isn't she a beauty!" said one tall woman.

"Ah! what distinction!" was the reply.

"One cannot mistake the air that comes only from ages of the most refined surroundings."

"How I should like to own that superb creature!"

Jap pushed near enough to get a glimpse of the cage and read a placard which announced that "The Blue Ribbon and Gold Medal of the Knickerbocker High Society Cat and Pet Show had been awarded to the thoroughbred pedigreed Royal Analostan, imported and exhibited by J. Malee, Esquire, the well-known fancier. Not for sale." Jap caught his breath; he stared—yes, surely, there, high in a gilded cage on velvet cushions, with two policemen for guards, her fur bright black and pale grey, her bluish eyes slightly closed, was his Slum Kitty, looking the picture of a cat that was bored to death.

Jap Malee lingered around that cage for hours, drinking a draught of glory such as he had never before known. But he saw that it would be wise for him to remain unknown; his "butler" must do all the business.

* * * * *

It was Slum Kitty who made that show a success. Each day her value went up in the owner's eye. He did not know what prices had been given for cats, and thought that he was touching a record pitch when his "butler" gave the director authority to sell the cat for $100.

This is how it came about that the Slum Cat found herself transferred to a Fifth Avenue mansion. She showed a most unaccountable wildness as well as other peculiarities. Her retreat from the lap-dog to the centre of the dinner-table was understood to express a deep-rooted though mistaken idea of avoiding a defiling touch. The patrician way in which she would get the cover off a milk-can was especially applauded, while her frequent wallowings in the garbage-pail were understood to be the manifestation of a little pardonable high-born eccentricity. She was fed and pampered,

shown and praised, but she was not happy. She clawed at that blue ribbon around her neck till she got it off; she jumped against the plate-glass because that seemed the road to outside, and she would sit and gaze out on the roofs and back yards at the other side of the window, and wish she could be among them for a change.

She was strictly watched — was never allowed outside — so that all the happy garbage-can moments occurred while these receptacles of joy were indoors. But one night in March, as they were being set out a-row for the early scavenger, the Royal Analostan saw her chance, slipped out of the door, and was lost to view.

* * * * *

Of course there was a grand stir; but Pussy neither knew nor cared anything about that. Her one thought was to go home. A raw east wind had been rising, and now it came to her with a particularly friendly message. Man would have called it an unpleasant smell of the docks, but to Pussy it was a welcome message from her own country. She trotted on down the long street due east, threading the rails of front gardens, stopping like a statue for an instant, or crossing the street in search of the darkest side. She came at length to the docks and to the water, but the place was strange. She could go north or south; something turned her southward, and dodging among docks and dogs, carts and cats, crooked arms of the bay and straight board fences, she got in an hour or two into familiar scenes and smells, and before the sun came up she crawled back, weary and footsore, through the same old hole in the same old fence, and over a wall into her junk-yard back of the bird-cellar — yes, back into the very cracker-box where she was born.

After a long rest she came quietly down from the cracker-box towards the steps leading to the cellar, and engaged in her old-time pursuit of seeking for eatables. The door opened, and there stood the negro. He shouted to the bird-man inside —

"Say, boss, come hyar! Ef dare ain't dat dar Royal Ankalostan comed back!"

Jap came in time to see the cat jumping the wall. The Royal Analostan had been a windfall for him; had been the means of adding many comforts to the cellar and several prisoners to the cages. It was now of the utmost importance to recapture her Majesty. Stale fish-heads and other infallible lures were put out till Pussy was induced to chew at a large fish-head in a box-trap. The negro in watching pulled the string that dropped the lid, and a minute later the Analostan was again in a cage in the cellar. Meanwhile Jap had been watching the "Lost and Found" column. There it was: "Twenty-five dollars reward," etc. That

"The howl of downtrodden America."

night Mr. Malee's "butler" called at the Fifth Avenue mansion with the missing cat. "Mr. Malee's compliments, sah." Of course, Mr. Malee could not be rewarded, but the "butler" was evidently open to any offer.

Kitty was guarded carefully after that, but so far from being disgusted with the old life of starving and glad of her care, she became wilder and more dissatisfied.

* * * * *

The spring was on in full power now, and the Fifth Avenue family were thinking of their country residence. They packed up, closed house, and moved off to the summer home some fifty miles away; and Pussy, in a basket, went with them.

The basket was put on the back seat of a carriage. New sounds and passing smells were entered and left. Then a roaring of many feet, more swinging of the basket, then some clicks, some bangs, a long, shrill whistle, and door-bells of a very big front door, a rumbling, a whizzing, an unpleasant smell; then there was a succession of jolts, roars, jars, stops, clicks, clacks, smells, jumps, shakes, more smells, more shakes, big shakes, little shakes, gases, smokes, screeches, door-bells, tremblings, roars, thunders, and some new smells, raps, taps, heavings, rumbling, and more smells. When at last it all stopped, the sun came twinkling through the basket lid. The Royal Cat was lifted into another carriage, and they turned aside from their past course. Very soon the carriage swerved, the noises of its wheels were grittings and rattlings, a new and horrible sound was added—the barking of dogs, big and little, and dreadfully close. The basket was lifted, and Slum Kitty had reached her country home.

Everyone was officiously kind. All wanted to please the Royal Cat, but, somehow, none of them did, except possibly the big, fat cook that Kitty discovered on wandering into the kitchen. That greasy woman smelt more like a slum than anything she had met for months, and the Royal Analostan was proportionately attracted. The cook, when she learned that fears were entertained about the cat's staying, said: "Shure she'd 'tind to thot; wanst a cat licks her futs, shure she's at home." So she deftly caught the unapproachable Royalty in her apron and committed the horrible sacrilege of greasing the soles of her feet with pot grease. Of course, Kitty resented it; she resented everything in the place; but on being set down she began to dress her paws, and found evident satisfaction in that grease. She licked all four feet for an hour, and the cook triumphantly announced that now "shure she's be apt to shtay": and stay she did, but she showed a most surprising and disgusting preference for the kitchen and the cook and the garbage-pail.

The family, though distressed by these high-born eccentricities, were glad to see the Royal Analostan more contented and approachable. They gave her more liberty after a week or two. They guarded her from every menace. The dogs were taught to respect her; no man or boy about the place would have dreamed of throwing a stone at the famous pedigreed cat, and she had all the food she wanted, but still she was not happy. She was hankering for many things, she scarcely knew what. She had everything—yes, but she wanted something else. Plenty to eat and drink—yes, but milk does not taste the same when you can go and drink all you want from a saucer; it has to be stolen out of a tin pail when one is pinched with hunger, or it does not have the tang—it is not milk.

How Pussy did hate it all! True, there was one sweet-smelling shrub in the whole horrible place—one that she did enjoy nipping and rubbing against; it was the only bright spot in her country life.

One day, after a summer of discontent, a succession of things happened that stirred anew the slum instincts of the royal prisoner. A great bundle of stuff from the docks had reached the country mansion. What it contained was of little moment, but it was rich with the most piquant of slum smells. The chords of memory surely dwell in the nose, and Pussy's past was conjured up with dangerous force. Next day the cook left through some trouble. That evening the youngest boy of the house, a horrid little American with no proper appreciation of royalty, was tying a tin to the blue-blooded one's tail, doubtless in furtherance of some altruistic project, when Pussy resented it with a paw that wore five big fish-hooks for the occasion. The howl of downtrodden America roused America's mother: the deft and womanly blow she aimed with her book was miraculously avoided, and Pussy took flight—upstairs, of course. A hunted rat runs downstairs, a hunted dog goes on the level, a hunted cat runs up. She hid in the garret and waited till night came. Then, gliding downstairs, she tried the screen doors, found one unlatched, and escaped into the black August night. Pitch black to man's eyes, it was simply grey to her, and

she glided through the disgusting shrubbery and flower-beds, had a final nip at that one little bush that had been an attractive spot in the garden, and boldly took her back track of the spring.

How could she take a back track that she never saw? There is in all animals some sense of direction. It is low in man and high in horses, but cats have a large gift, and this mysterious guide took her westward —not clearly and definitely, but with a general impulse that was made definite because the easiest travel was on the road. In an hour she had reached the Hudson River. Her nose had told her many times that the course was true. Smell after smell came back.

At the river was the railroad. She could not go on the water; she must go north or south. This was a case where her sense of direction was clear: it said "Go south"; and such time as she never had made before, but dared not leap the fence. She was running like a dog—was flying, but all in vain: the monstrous pursuer overtook her, but missed her in the darkness, and hurried past, to be lost in the night, while Kitty sat gasping for breath.

This was only the first encounter with the strange monsters—strange to her eyes—her nose seemed to know them, and told her that this was another landmark on the home trail. But Pussy learned that they were very stupid, and could not find her at all if she hid by slipping quietly under a fence and lying still. Before morning she had encountered many of them, but escaped unharmed from all.

About sunrise she reached a nice little slum on her home trail, and was lucky enough to find several unsterilised eatables in an ash-

"Go a-slumming in the gloaming."

Kitty trotted down the footpath between the iron rails and the fence.

LIFE III.

CATS can go very fast up a tree or over a wall; but when it comes to the long, steady trot that reels off mile after mile, hour after hour, it is not the cat-hop, but the dog-trot, that counts. She became tired and a little footsore. She was thinking of rest when a dog came running to the fence near by and broke out into such a horrible barking close to her ear that Pussy leaped in terror. She ran as hard as she could down the path. The barking seemed to grow into a low rumble—a louder rumble and roaring—a terrifying thunder. A light shone; Kitty glanced back to see, not the dog, but a huge black thing with a blazing eye, coming on yowling and spitting like a yard full of tom-cats. She put forth all her power to run, made heap. She spent the day around a stable. It was very like home, but she had no idea of staying there. She was driven by an inner craving that was neither hunger nor fear, and next evening set out as before. She had seen the "one-eyed thunder-rollers" all day going by, and was getting used to them. That night passed much like the first one. The days went by in skulking in barns, hiding from dogs and small boys, and the nights in limping along the track, for she was getting footsore; but on she went, mile after mile, southward, ever southward — dogs, boys, roarers, hunger—dogs, boys, roarers, hunger —but day after day with increasing weariness on she went, and her nose from time to time cheered her by confidently reporting: "This surely is a smell we passed last spring."

* * * * *

So week after week went by, and Pussy, dirty, ribbonless, footsore and weary, arrived

at the Harlem Bridge. Though it was enveloped in delicious smells, she did not like the look of that bridge. For half the night she wandered up and down the shore without discovering any other means of going south excepting some other bridges. Somehow she had to come back to it; not only its smells were familiar, but from time to time, when a "one-eye" ran over it, there was the peculiar rumbling roar that was a sensation in the springtime trip. She leaped to the timber stringer and glided out over the water. She had got less than a third of of the way over when a "thundering one-eye" came roaring at her from the opposite end. She was much frightened, but knowing their blindness, she dropped to a low-side beam and there crouched in hiding. Of course, the stupid monster missed her and passed on, and all would have been well, but it turned back, or another just like it, and came suddenly roaring behind her. Pussy leaped to the long track and made for the home shore. She might have got there, but a third of the red-eyed terrors came roaring down at her from that side. She was running her hardest, but was caught between two foes. There was nothing for it but a desperate leap from the timbers into—she did not know what. Down—down—down—plop! splash! plunge into the deep water—not cold, for it was August, but oh, so horrible! She spluttered and coughed and struck out for the shore. She had never learned to swim, and yet she swam, for the simple reason that a cat's position and attitude in swimming are the same as her position and attitude in walking. She had fallen into a place she did not like; naturally she tried to walk out, and the result was that she swam ashore. Which shore? It never fails—the south—the shore nearest home. She scrambled out all dripping wet, up the muddy bank and through coal-piles and dust-heaps, looking as black, dirty, and unroyal as it was possible for a cat to look.

Once the shock was over, the royal pedigreed slummer began to feel better for the plunge. A genial glow without from the bath, a genial sense of triumph within, for had she not outwitted three of the big terrors?

Her nose, her memory, and her instinct of direction inclined her to get on the track again, but the place was infested with the big thunder-rollers, and prudence led her to turn aside and follow the river bank with its musky home reminders.

She was more than two days learning the infinite dangers and complexities of the East River docks, and at length, on the third night, she reached familiar ground, the place she had passed the night of her first escape. From that her course was sure and rapid. She knew just where she was going and how to get there. She knew even the more prominent features in the dogscape now. She went faster, felt happier. In a little while she would be curled up in the old junk-yard. Another turn and the block was in sight——

* * * * *

But—what!—it was gone. Kitty could not believe her eyes. There, where had stood, or leaned, or slouched, or straggled—the houses of the block—was a great broken wilderness of stone, lumber, and holes in the ground.

Kitty walked all around it. She knew by the bearings and by the local colour of the pavement that she was in her home; that there had lived the bird-man, and there was the old junk-yard; but all were gone, completely gone, taking the familiar odours with them; and Pussy turned sick at heart in the utter hopelessness of the case. Her home love was her master mood. She had given up all to come to a home that no longer existed, and for once her brave little spirit was cast down. She wandered over the silent heaps of rubbish and found neither consolation nor eatables. The ruin had covered several of the blocks and reached back from the water. It was not a fire. Kitty had seen one of these things once. Pussy knew nothing of the great bridge that was to rise from this very spot.

When the sun came up, Kitty sought for cover. An adjoining block still stood with little change, and the Royal Analostan retired to that. She knew some of its trails, but, once there, was unpleasantly surprised to find the place swarming with cats that, like herself, were driven from their old grounds; and when the garbage-cans came out, there were several cats at each. It meant a famine in the land, and Pussy, after standing it a few days, set out to find her other home in Fifth Avenue. She got there to find it shut up and deserted, and the next night she returned to the crowded slum.

September and October wore away. Many of the cats died of starvation or were too weak to escape their natural enemies. But Kitty, young and strong, still lived.

Great changes had come over the ruined

blocks. Though silent the night she saw them, they were crowded with noisy workmen all day. A tall building was completed by the end of October, and Slum Kitty, driven by hunger, went sneaking up to a pail that a negro had set outside. The pail, unfortunately, was not garbage, but a new thing in that region, a scrubbing-pail—a sad disappointment, but it had a sense of comfort; there was a trace of a familiar touch on the handle. While she was studying it, the negro elevator-boy came out again. In spite of his blue clothes, his odorous person confirmed the good impression of the handle. Kitty had retreated across the street. He gazed at her.

"Sho ef dat don't look like de Royal Ankalostan—hya, Pussy—Pussy—Pussy—Pus-s-s-y, co-o-o-me—Pus-s-sy, hya, I specs she's sho hungry."

Hungry! She had not had a real meal for a month. The negro went into the hall and reappeared with a portion of his own lunch.

"Hya, Pussy, Puss—Puss—Puss!" At length he laid the meat on the pavement and went back to the door. Slum Kitty came, found it savoury; sniffed at the meat, seized it, and fled like a little tigress to eat her prize in peace.

LIFE IV.

THIS was the beginning of a new era. Pussy came to the door of the building now when pinched by hunger, and the good feeling for the negro grew. She had never understood that man before. Now he was her friend, the only one she had.

One week Pussy caught a rat. She was crossing the street in front of the new building when her friend opened the door for a well-dressed man to come out.

"Hallo! look at that for a cat," said the man.

"Yes, sah," answered the negro; "dat's ma cat, sah; she's a terror on rats, sah. Hez 'em 'bout cleaned up, sah; dat's why she so thin."

"Well, don't let her starve," said the man, with the air of a landlord. "Can't you feed her?"

"De livermeat man comes reg'lar, sah, quatah dollar a week, sah," said the negro, realising that he was entitled to the extra fifteen cents for "the idea."

"That's all right; I'll stand it."

* * * * *

Since then the negro has sold her a number of times with a perfectly clear conscience, because he knows quite well that it is only a question of a few days before the Royal Analostan comes back again. She has learned to tolerate the elevator and even to ride up and down on it. The negro stoutly maintains that once she heard the meat-man while she was on the top floor, and managed to press the button that called the elevator to take her down.

She is sleek and beautiful again. She is not only one of the four hundred that form the inner circle about the liverman's barrow, but she is recognised as the star pensioner as well.

But in spite of her prosperity, her social position, her royal name and fake pedigree, the greatest pleasure of her life is to slip out and go a-slumming in the gloaming; for now, as in her previous lives, she is at heart, and likely to be, nothing but a dirty little Slum Cat.

HE WAITS!

I WATCHED him pass along the busy street,
When, in the sunset hour, he went away.
I could not weep—for, surely we should meet
Some day!

But he has gone beyond the golden gates,
And all the long, long years pass silently.
Yet, in that blessèd place, I know he waits
For me!

L. G. MOBERLY.

THE WATERLOO OF MR. JIMMY ROGERS.

BY JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "The Garden of Lies."

YOUNG Carol Cartwright, happening into the University Club late one afternoon, came upon a morose and dejected figure which sat huddled in a chair beside one of the windows. The figure raised a listless head, and young Cartwright made outcry, for it was Livingstone.

"It's all about Jimmy Rogers," said Mr. Livingstone bitterly. "This earth is not spacious enough for both Jimmy Rogers and me. One day I shall kill him, I expect; then there'll be no one left to perpetrate silly practical jokes upon me—— No, I *won't* have a drink, and I won't smoke. I've been trying for a week to drink myself to death, but it's no good. I can't forget my troubles."

"But why don't you get even with him?" demanded young Cartwright. "Why don't you think up some joke of your own to pay him out with?"

"Think!" said Livingstone gloomily. "What do you suppose I spend my life in doing? I've devoted five years of painstaking endeavour to making him miserable, but he always goes me one better. No, there is no help for it. This last outrage of his has convinced me that I must kill him."

Young Cartwright shook an admiring head.

"You're wonderful, you two!" he said, sighing. "It is a pleasure to watch you. I wish *I* had nothing in the world to do but manufacture devilish traps for my best friend. Just you wait till you're married, like me—you, or Jimmy Rogers. You'll jolly well find out that life contains other things besides jokes." Mr. Livingstone was moved to jeer.

"But I'll tell you," continued young Cartwright, "what you'd best do. You come and dine with us to-night. We're still in town—we don't leave for a fortnight yet. Helen'll fix you out. Helen's ingenuity is something more than human. You come and dine with us, and we'll concoct a scheme that'll make Jimmy Rogers wish he'd been born a hermit. Run along, now! You've just an hour to dress in."

Mr. Livingstone regarded him suspiciously.

"You're not in some game with Jimmy Rogers?" he demanded. "You're not trying to let me into more trouble? I've been had before through my childlike trust in people whom Jimmy had sent to me by way of decoys."

"I have not seen Jimmy Rogers for three months," said young Cartwright, "and you're not being had. Of course, if you scorn my help——"

"Oh, I'll come, right enough!" said Livingstone, "and I'll take all the help I can get, too. Heaven knows I need it—it's only that I've learned to be suspicious of everybody. That is a good suggestion of yours about Helen. Helen's cleverer than all the rest of us together. At eight, then?—I'm off."

Some hours later, Helen Cartwright sat back in her chair and wrinkled her exceedingly pretty brow in thought.

"Ye—es," she said, "that is a very good notion. You're really looking up, Carol, angel! You'll be as clever as the rest of us if you don't look sharp—ye—es. I think I shall rather—like it, you know. Jimmy's a dear, even if he does love to lark with our only Gerald Augustus——" She made a humorous face at the revengeful Mr. Livingstone across the table. "And there was a day when—ah, well, he's a dear! I thought so long before you tied me to your chariot-wheels, Mr. Cartwright. How do you know," she demanded, "that this inspired scheme of yours is safe? How do you know that I won't turn serious and run away with Jimmy, or something?"

"You run away with Jimmy Rogers," said her lord and master, "and, by Jove, I'll make you stay there! I won't take you back. I can't think of a more awful fate than that. Fancy being tied up to Jimmy Rogers! He has two separate and independent love affairs every week of his life."

"Except when engaged in bedevilling me," corrected Livingstone. "That's a good bit of the time." He rose and emotionally shook the hand of Mrs. Cartwright.

"I expect you have saved my life," he said. "I was very low in my mind when Carol happened upon me this afternoon—

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very low; and rat poison is to be obtained at any pharmacy. Now I am going to hunt up Jimmy Rogers. There's nothing like striking while the iron is hot. I shall just instil a bit of suspicion into his mind, and I expect you will see him within a day or two. For my sake have no mercy on him. He has had none on me. He had me arrested by an S. P. C. A. man for cruelty to my own dog, Marcus Aurelius, just because I wouldn't let Marcus Aurelius sleep in my silk pyjamas that Jimmy had put on him."

He went out and called a cab, and had himself driven to Jimmy Rogers's chambers in the Cadogan, where, greatly to his astonishment, he found that young gentleman at home in a dressing-gown and slippers. He bolted in unannounced, and Jimmy Rogers made a laudable attempt to conceal a long, white glove and a small bunch of dried violets, which he had been holding in his hands as he sat at ease before the fire.

Mr. Livingstone apologised.

"I trust I have not — er — interrupted a *tête-à-tête*," he deprecated, peering into the other room as if he expected to find a second person.

"Certainly not!" said Jimmy Rogers shortly.

"At home in a dressing-gown and slippers."

"Oh!" said Mr. Livingstone in a tone of carefully studied insult. "Nice glove," he said. "Must be very warm in winter weather—keep your whole arm warm. I'll get some for myself if you'll tell me where you go for them." Jimmy Rogers regarded him malevolently and opened his mouth for retort, but thought better of it.

"I've been dining with the Cartwrights," said Mr. Livingstone, selecting a cigarette from a box near at hand, and then absently dropping the box in his pocket—"the Carol Cartwrights, and they——"

"Did you get away with any of the spoons?" inquired Mr. Rogers, eyeing the recent site of the cigarette-box.

"I did not," said Mr. Livingstone. "How was I to know that you wanted spoons? If you can't get on without the Cartwrights' spoons, why don't you go after them yourself? Helen'd be glad to see you, I expect. She'd be glad to see anybody, poor girl!"

Jimmy Rogers swung about in his chair and frowned anxiously across the room at his chum.

"'Poor girl'?" said he. "What do you mean? Why 'poor girl'? I don't know any reason for calling Helen Cartwright a poor girl."

"No," said Mr. Livingstone, thoughtfully regarding the end of his cigarette, "I expect not. You have not been near her for some time. She said so this evening. She said it as if she—felt a bit cut up about your stopping away. I'm afraid that she and Carol — well — oh, it's nothing, I expect. At any rate, it's none of my affair."

"You ought to live in a country town and belong to a sewing-circle!" said Jimmy Rogers rudely. "You ought to keep a cat and a parrot, and wear grey curls, and watch the neighbours through your front parlour curtains — that's what you ought to do. You're a gossip!"

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Livingstone. "Go and have a look yourself, if you don't believe me. You used to be very keen on Helen before she was married. Go and see her. You have a revengeful nature. It ought to please you to see her unhappy with the man she preferred to you."

Jimmy Rogers turned back to the fire and

sat staring into it, his hands on his knees, for a long time.

"I believe you're lying," he said presently, "though I always thought that Cartwright was capable of anything. Why, if I thought he was ill-treating Helen—— I believe you're lying, but I shall have a look, by Jove!"

"Do!" said Mr. Livingstone, grinning safely in his dark corner. "Do! I really wish you would."

* * *

The very next afternoon Jimmy Rogers was told at the door that Mrs. Cartwright was at home.

"Oh, this is good of you, Jimmy!" she said, as he entered the drawing-room, "—but good of you! It has been such an age, and I've really wanted to see you." She turned to the man who had announced him, and ordered the tea-things to be brought into the small music-room beyond. "It's so much cosier there, Jimmy," she said. "This room is such a great church of a place!—oh, and I'm not at home to anyone else, Barrow. That's a very pronounced compliment to you, Jimmy. I was expecting some nice people, but I shan't see them. I want you quite alone."

She led the way into the small music-room, which was really a sort of lounge, with comfortable stuffed chairs and a fire, and a piano to give it its name. The late afternoon sunlight shone redly in through the curtains and blended with the red of the fire which wavered over the floor and was mirrored on the polished wood of the piano.

Mrs. Cartwright crossed to one of the windows and stood for a moment looking out over the avenue to the trees of the park beyond, and Jimmy Rogers, his mind full of the suspicions which the skilful Mr. Livingstone had implanted there on the previous evening, watched her keenly. He had seen her not more than a half-dozen times during the two years of her marriage, and those half-dozen times rather formally, but he had once fancied himself rather in love with her, and had felt a bit abused and ill-treated when she married Carol Cartwright.

"'Two lumps, Jimmy, I remember, and no milk.'"

It seemed to him now, watching her in the light of what had been told him, that she had greatly altered, that she was not at all the frivolous young woman who had used to sit out dances with him and listen with such delighted interest to his appreciation of her eyes and hair. It seemed to him that the girl had been metamorphosed into a woman much more than two years older than the girl had been, and that the woman's face showed care and disillusionment and a certain

weary bitterness. As a matter of fact, this was the sheerest absurdity, for Mrs. Cartwright had never in her life looked better or more at peace with the world; but the prejudiced eye is very apt to find what it is looking for.

"Ah! the tea?" said Mrs. Cartwright at last, turning back into the room as the tea-things were brought. "Two lumps, Jimmy, I remember, and no milk."

"Yes, thanks," said Jimmy Rogers. "By Jove, what a memory!"

"Oh, I remember a great lot of things, Jimmy," said she. "I remember—never mind! How are you, and what are you doing? Tell me about yourself. You and Jerry Livingstone are so little at home that we lose all trace of you. Jerry dined with us last evening. Did you know?"

"Did he?" said Jimmy Rogers. "Oh, never mind about me! I want to talk about you. You're—you're perfectly fit, and—all that sort of thing, Helen? I know women hate to be told that they're not looking well, but—you look to me as if you didn't play enough golf, and spent too much time sitting about and thinking of your troubles. That's no good, you know."

"Oh, a wife's not a girl, Jimmy!" said Mrs. Cartwright, turning her head away. "You knew me when I hadn't a care in the world. You can't expect me to be quite like that now. We matrons have our little tribulations."

"Ye—es," said Jimmy Rogers, watching her averted face. "Ye—es. Still——"

"Jimmy," said Mrs. Cartwright, facing him suddenly, "we used to be very fond of each other once, didn't we? I haven't forgotten. Women don't, you know. Well—just because of that, and—and it's relative to what you were saying a moment ago, sort of—I want to give you a word of advice. Don't marry! That's all. Don't marry! Now we'll talk about something else."

"I wish," said Jimmy Rogers, frowning anxiously towards her, "I wish you'd—I wish you could——"

"Well, I can't, and I won't," said she. "I don't at all fancy young wives who tell their troubles to the men they used to—to like. No, Jimmy, you're a dear, but you mustn't ask questions, and I mustn't talk—not about that sort of thing. Let's talk about *us*. Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy! what times we had, hadn't we? I wonder if you remember them as well as I do."

"I'll wager that I remember them a great lot better," said Jimmy Rogers fervently, "and that I've spent many more hours during the last two years in thinking of them."

"I wonder," said Mrs. Cartwright, with a little odd smile. "I wonder, Jimmy?"

"I remember them," said Jimmy Rogers, warming to his subject, "from the days when you wore a blue sash and little stiff skirts like a ballet-dancer, and your hair in two beribboned pigtails—when I used to let you ride my bicycle, a high one, in Madison Avenue; from those days to the last times we had in Paris the year before you were engaged."

"And the trip to Robinson!" said Mrs. Cartwright, with bright eyes.

"And the trip to Robinson," agreed Jimmy Rogers, "and the time you and your mother and I ran away to Luxembourg. And better still than that, best of all," said he, smiling reminiscently out across the room, "the day when you and I ran away from the picnic-party at Clamart to Meudon and got lost on the way."

Mrs. Cartwright stiffened suddenly in her chair, but Jimmy Rogers was not looking at her and so rushed onward to his undoing.

"That was the best of them all," he said again. "I shall never forget that day, Helen. I remember everything each of us said and—and did. I've marked that day with the whitest stone of any day I ever spent." He became all at once conscious of the rigidity of Mrs. Cartwright's attitude and scowled at her questioningly.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "There's nothing about it to be ashamed of, is there? You made a poor chap very happy for one afternoon, and gave him something to look back upon all his life. I don't see why——"

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" said Mrs. Cartwright coldly. "As it happens, I wasn't the girl. That is all. Your memory has its lapses evidently."

"The dickens!" said Jimmy Rogers.

Mrs. Cartwright rose with some decision and went to the window, where she stood looking out for some time. Once or twice she laughed, a half-angry, half-amused laugh; but when at length she turned back into the room, only the amusement seemed to be left.

"Jimmy, Jimmy!" she said, "you're incorrigible. By all rights I should be furious with you; but I can't be, somehow. People always forgive you, don't they? They always did. It's just because you're you, I expect. Come again soon, Jimmy, very soon. I think I need a bit of cheering up."

But when the depressed and penitent Mr. Rogers had withdrawn, she went over to the fire, which was burning admirably, and fell upon it with the poker—beat it cruelly for no apparent reason.

"'Best of them all!'" she said fiercely. "'Marked it with the whitest stone of'—oh, I'll pay him out for that! I was going to tell him, but I shan't now. I shall help Jerry Livingstone all I can.

"I said he was a dear. He's a brute!" Then after a little she laughed again. "He's a sort of dear, though," she concluded.

* * * * *

"Do you know," said Jimmy Rogers that evening to Livingstone, "do you know, I fancy you were right, for once—about the Cartwrights, I mean?"

"Gossip!" said Mr. Livingstone reprovingly. "Scandalmonger!"

"Oh, you be hanged!" said Jimmy Rogers. "Now, I dropped in there this afternoon by chance—I happened to be passing—Is there anything the matter with you, may I ask?—and Helen looked to me very bad—very bad. I believe that bounder ill-treats the girl. I don't suppose he beats her, but Helen has a peculiarly sensitive nature, and I expect he doesn't understand it at all."

"I am very sorry," said Mr. Livingstone hastily, "but I have just remembered an important engagement. I shall have to leave you."

Out in the passage he leaned against the wall until he was able to walk to the lift. The lift-boy regarded his paroxysms with awed amazement, and a policeman followed him two blocks down Fifth Avenue under the impression that he was very far gone in drink.

The succeeding days, for a fortnight or more, he ever after counted among the happiest of his life. They were a healing balm to his lacerated feelings, for the benighted Rogers fairly rushed into the pitfall set for his feet. His bearing acquired each day a more impressive depth of mysterious reserve, and, upon occasion, when this reserve was for the moment overborne, he became moodily argumentative on the subject of ill-assorted marriages and misunderstood natures. He was much at the Cartwrights', *tête-à-tête* with Helen, so Mr. Livingstone learned from Carol Cartwright.

"And I think," said Cartwright proudly, "I think Helen's playing him along as well as even you could wish. He glares at me every time I meet him in the hall—fairly snarls like a dog with a bone, you know. I think Helen has told him that I beat her."

From Mrs. Cartwright herself Livingstone got very little.

"I'm doing all I promised to do," she said evasively. "How should I remember what we talk about? Oh, it will take a long time to pay him out on my own score—his mixing me up with some other girl who got lost with him in the Meudon wood. That is very hard to forgive. Don't you worry! He'll be in no state to play any more jokes on you for some time yet."

But the climax of the thing came quite fortuitously, and when no one was in the least expecting it. Jimmy Rogers arrived one afternoon and made his way at once to the little music-room where Mrs. Cartwright was in the way of receiving him. He found her there alone, sitting before a fire, as she loved to do, and it was characteristic of the degree of intimacy into which they had fallen that she did not give him her hand or smile politely or say that she was glad to see him.

Jimmy Rogers dropped into a chair near by, and the woman looked at him quite soberly.

"You seem a bit pale, Jimmy," she said, "and a bit tired."

"I am tired," said he. "I didn't sleep last night, and that's a new experience."

"Ah," said Mrs. Cartwright, "you must go to my doctor. He gave me some powder things once that were excellent for getting you to sleep. He's really a rather remarkable sort of man. He never fails at anything, I should think." Mrs. Cartwright was not in the least interested in her doctor nor in his sleep-inducing powders, and she knew that Jimmy Rogers was as little interested as she herself, but she went on talking, a bit rapidly and with no thought of her words, because she was oddly afraid and nervous. There was a curious sense of strain in the situation, a terseness, a hint of danger, though neither one of the two people had said anything out of the common or had shown any intention of so doing.

But after several minutes of this rambling monologue, Jimmy Rogers raised his head with a little gesture of impatience, and the woman's aimless speech stopped short.

"What's to be done about it all, Helen?" said he. "It can't go on in this way for ever."

"What do you—I don't know what you mean," said Mrs. Cartwright under her breath, but she would not meet his eyes.

"'I wonder,' said Mrs. Cartwright, with a little odd smile."

"'What do you—I don't know what you mean.'"

"Oh, yes, you do," said he – "I think you do. I mean you—your life, your whole existence. It's being made very nearly—impossible for you here, and—and I can't sit by and pretend not to notice. I've been—we've been—you spoke of it yourself, the other day—too fond of each other for that. If it were any other woman, I'd—keep out of it. I know well enough how the chap is regarded who mixes himself up in his neighbour's domestic affairs, but I can't sit by and see you unhappy."

Mrs. Cartwright turned a bit away from him in her chair with a little, low-voiced, inarticulate murmur, but Jimmy Rogers leaned towards her, frowning anxiously.

"We've—we've talked about the thing rather freely, you know, so that it isn't as if —I say, it isn't as if I were —mistaken about the conditions. They're too bad to be borne." Mrs. Cartwright rose nervously from her chair and moved over towards one of the windows, and, after a moment, Jimmy Rogers also rose and followed her.

"What do you want me to do, Jimmy?" she said presently, with her back towards him.

"Chuck it!" said Jimmy Rogers—"leave it all! It's the only possible thing." Mrs. Cartwright turned to him slowly. She was very pale, and her eyes were wide and full of something which he could not fathom. She put out her two hands upon his breast, and he felt that they were trembling violently.

"Do you—mean, Jimmy," said Mrs. Cartwright in a slow whisper, staring up into his face, "do you mean that you—want me to leave Carol for—*you*, that you want me to—run away with *you?*"

Jimmy Rogers's heart gave one unparalleled leap of horror and astonishment and dismay, and his mind, as if he were drowning or falling from a height, ran backward at lightning speed over the past fortnight and over everything that he had said and that Helen had said, until he saw how reasonably she had misunderstood—how reasonably any woman might have misunderstood—his innocent concern for her happiness, and his desire to see her free of that brutal husband and among her friends. He remembered now,

too late, how they had sentimentalised over their fondness for each other before Helen's marriage, and he saw how she had misunderstood that. Then, with that same unnatural swiftness of fancy, he looked ahead over the life the two of them must lead together—the giving up of home and friends for ever, the second-rate places and second-rate people they must live among. But he was essentially a thoroughbred, and the notion of going back, of trying to evade what he had brought upon himself, never once entered his mind, for, as the woman spoke, he had known what the curious look in her eyes meant.

He smiled down at her gravely, and between her whispered question and his answer there was hardly a perceptible pause.

"Yes," said Jimmy Rogers, nodding, "yes, that is just what I mean, Helen. I want you to come to me. I—lost you, two years ago. I want you back. Will you come? You can't stay here. That—man is making you wretchedly unhappy; but there's a great big world out yonder, Helen, with a great lot of happiness in it, and some of that belongs to us. Will you come with me?"

"Jimmy! Jimmy!" cried Mrs. Cartwright again in a gasping whisper, but there was a pink flush coming up over her cheeks, and it seemed that she could not stir her eyes from his.

"Oh, I mustn't let you—talk so!" she said. "Jimmy, do you—mean it? You and—I? Oh, it's like our old dreams that we—what am I thinking of? Jimmy, you're—mad—*mad!*"

"I beg your pardon!" said Carol Cartwright from the centre of the room behind them. Mrs. Cartwright gave a smothered scream and collapsed against the window-frame, hiding her face in her hands, but Jimmy Rogers swung about to face the enemy.

"I came in," explained Mr. Cartwright, "to ask for a cup of tea. I did not expect to find a young man urging my wife to run away with him. My feelings," he said querulously, "are hurt—very much hurt." He turned to Gerald Livingstone, who stood a little behind him: "Don't you think my feelings have a right to feel hurt?" he demanded.

"They have," said Mr. Livingstone gravely. "But, whatever the state of your feelings, I

"'I beg your pardon!'"

beseech you, do nothing violent. Remember that there is a lady present. I should advise that you see this—person in your study."

"You are very wise," said Mr. Cartwright. "I will do as you suggest, though the feelings of a wronged and outraged husband incline me to a less reasonable course of conduct." He bowed formally to the petrified Rogers.

"May I ask," said he, "that when you have—er—finished your interview here, you will come to my study across the hall? Thank you!"

He bowed again and left the room, and Gerald Livingstone, shaking his head sadly, followed him out. Then Jimmy Rogers turned once more to where Mrs. Cartwright stood beside the window, laughing and sobbing together hysterically.

"Oh, can't you—see?" she cried between breaths. "It was all a—a joke. Jerry wanted to—play a joke on you, and I—promised to help; but oh, I—didn't mean it to go so far. I didn't, Jimmy! I didn't!"

Jimmy Rogers opened his mouth, but no words came.

"Then," he said finally, "then you weren't unhappy at all? Carol doesn't ill-treat you?"

Mrs. Cartwright, leaning against the window-frame, shrieked weakly and shook her head. But after a moment the fit of hysteria left her suddenly, and she came close to Jimmy Rogers again, holding him by his coat and looking up into his face.

"I—didn't mean it to go so far—Jimmy," she said. "Honestly I didn't. I—you were so—I lost my hold for an instant; and we used to be—very fond of each other, and—oh, Jimmy, Jimmy, there were two mad people in the room when Carol came—not one. Two, Jimmy! For a moment I—and now you must leave me. Go in to Carol and Jerry Livingstone. They are waiting to gloat over you. It was all a joke, Jimmy. Remember! All a joke—every bit!—oh, go, please! Go!"

Jimmy Rogers, like one walking in sleep, silent and dazed, crossed the room to the door. He turned at the door to look back. Helen Cartwright had dropped into a chair and sat there huddled, her face in her hands. Her shoulders were shaking, but whether she laughed or sobbed he could not tell.

"A—joke!" said Jimmy Rogers to himself. "A joke!" He rubbed a hand across his eyes and, with a final glance at the figure by the window, turned away out of the room. As he crossed the big drawing-room beyond, he heard from the distance the triumphant laughter of Carol Cartwright and Jerry Livingstone, and, in spite of himself, an unwilling grin struggled at the corners of his mouth.

"Oh, yes," he admitted; "I expect it is a rather good joke, but I'll pay Jerry Livingstone out, if I have to come back from the grave to do it!"

ON AN OLD BATTLEGROUND.

VALLEY and farmland meet the West,
Purple and gold and green;
Orchard and vineyard, song and rest,
Where their old-world wars have been.

Over the gleaners lightly sings
The lark to the falling sun,
Over that grave of far-off things
And old wars lost and won.

And over the hills where long ago
Strange old-world warriors met,
How sweet the purple vineyards grow,
How well the fields forget!

ARTHUR J. STRINGER.

OUR POPULATION.

A DIGEST OF THE LATELY PUBLISHED GENERAL REPORT UPON THE CENSUS OF 1901.

By JOHN HOLT SCHOOLING.

NEARLY sixty official parts relating to the Census of 1901 have been published since our last Census was taken; and the final Report, issued in August, 1904, is a big book of more than three hundred foolscap pages, full of information concerning ourselves and our surroundings, most of which information is important, while much of it is interesting.

The authorities who have prepared this voluminous Report—the best and the most ample Report during our now completed century of Census-taking—aptly refer the belated publication of their Report to the fact that the view expressed by a late eminent statesman sums up the situation: "I recognise the desirability of early progress, but I always recognise the unwisdom of sacrificing any substantial aim to the mere rapidity of conclusion."

For some reason or another no attempt has been made by the newspapers to present their readers with an intelligible summary of the principal facts disclosed in this Report. It has been briefly referred to with awe, and the sheer mass of it, and its necessary complexity—not its complication, bear in mind—has, it would seem, had the effect of dismaying would-be gleaners of information, and of preventing them from making any real attempt to show the results in a more popular form than can be adopted in the official Report itself. But the Editor of this magazine, realising the value of the Census Report, and the essential interest of it to the public, has asked me to

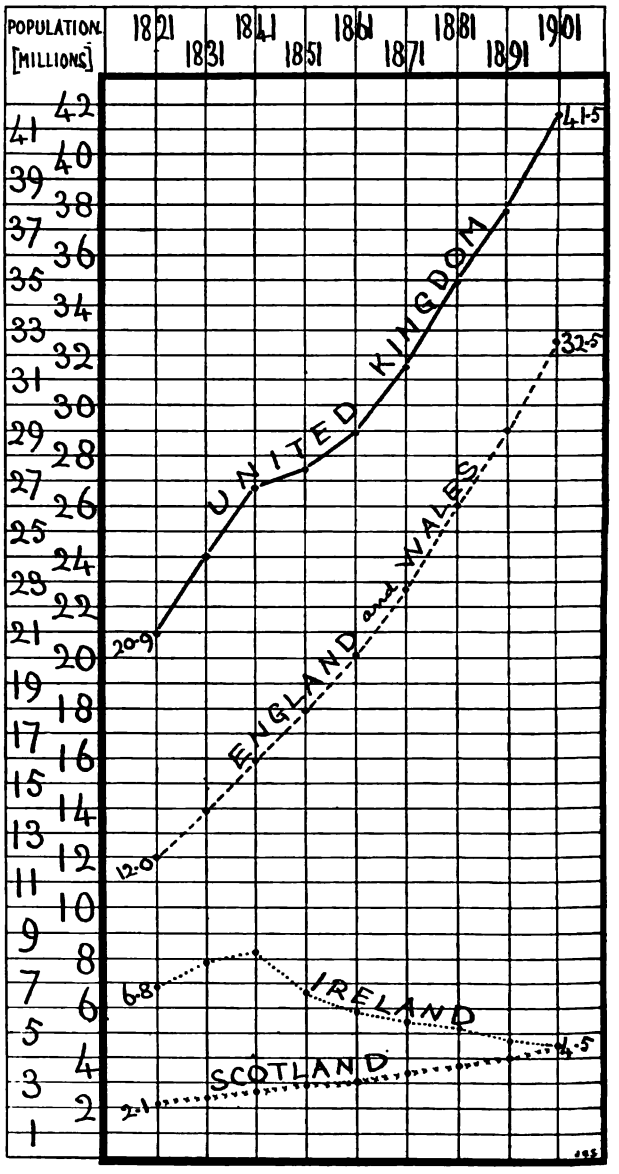
TABLE A.—Enumerated Population of the United Kingdom,* 1821–1901; and the percentage rate of increase or decrease during each intercensal period. [*See Diagram* I.]

Year.	Enumerated Population.				Increase or Decrease per cent. during each Ten Years.†			
	United Kingdom.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.	United Kingdom.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.
	Millions.	Millions.	Millions.	Millions.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
1821	20·9	12·0	2·1	6·8				
					15·0	15·8	13·0	14·2
1831	24·0	13·9	2·3	7·8				
					11·2	14·3	10·8	5·2
1841	26·7	15·9	2·6	8·2				
					2 5	12·7	10·2	- 19·8
1851	27·4	17·9	2·9	6·6				
					5·7	11·9	6·0	- 11·5
1861	28·9	20·1	3·0	5·8				
					8·8	13·2	9·7	- 6·7
1871	31·5	22·7	3·4	5·4				
					10·8	14·4	11·2	- 4·4
1881	34·9	26·0	3·7	5·2				
					8·2	11·7	7·8	- 9·1
1891	37·7	29·0	4·0	4·7				
					9·9	12·2	11·1	- 5·2
1901	41·5	32·5	4·5	4·5				
(1901)	(41,458,721)	(32,527,843)	(4,472,103)	(4,458,775)				

* Not including islands in the British seas.
† All these are rates of increase, except those marked -, which are rates of Irish decrease.

gorge it, and to set out some of the results of the subsequent process of mental digestion.

As already stated, we have now completed a century of Census-taking, our first Census having been made in 1801. There was a proposal to count the people in the middle of the eighteenth century. A member of the House of Commons, Mr. Thomas Potter, a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, brought in a Bill on March 30, 1753, for taking a yearly account of the numbers of the people, etc. This Bill was opposed with virulence and with much alarm. One of its chief opponents, Mr. Thornton, member for the city of York, said: "I did not believe that there was any set of men, or, indeed, any individual of the human species, so presumptuous and so abandoned as to make the proposal we have just heard. . . . Moreover, an annual register of our people will acquaint our enemies abroad with our weakness." Another opposing member "feared lest some public misfortune . . . should follow the numbering." These extraordinary opinions were expressed, bear in mind, so recently, from a relative time point of view, that the grandfathers of many old people actually counted in the 1901 Census were living at the time when this ludicrous opposition to a Census was heard in the House of Commons. This Bill passed the Commons, but was thrown out by the House of Lords. And so the first Census was postponed until March 10, 1801, the last Census date being April 1, 1901. The first two Censuses, in 1801 and in 1811, related only to England and Wales; the Census of 1821 was the first that included the whole of the United Kingdom.



I.—THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND OF EACH DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM, DURING 1821–1901. *See Table A.*

In Table A, I show a condensed summary of the population in each division of the United Kingdom during 1821–1901. [The figures for England and Wales in 1801 and in 1811 were 8·9 millions in 1801, and 10·2 millions in 1811. These two Census years are necessarily omitted from Table A. for the reason just mentioned.]

We see that while the population of England and Wales, and of Scotland, has shown a continuous increase during the past eighty years, the population of Ireland, which had risen to over eight millions in 1841, has, since that date, fallen continuously. It is mainly, though not entirely, due to this Irish decline that the rate of increase

in the population of the United Kingdom has shown the considerable variations to be seen in the second part of Table A.

But, despite this decline in Ireland, the population of the United Kingdom has doubled during these eighty years. The population of England and Wales has increased from 12·0 millions to 32·5 millions, a nearly threefold growth during 1821–1901; the population of Scotland rather more than doubled; and the population of Ireland has decreased from 6·8 millions in 1821 to 4·5 millions in 1901. Ireland has lost one-third of the population she possessed in 1821.

Although, in Table A, the populations of Scotland and of Ireland are both stated at 4·5 millions in 1901 (for the sake of condensation) yet the Scotch population very slightly exceeded the population of Ireland —for the first time in the history of our Censuses.

Looking at the rates of growth, between Census and Census, in Table A, we see that our largest rate of growth occurred between 1821 and 1831—a 15 per cent. increase. For England and Wales, the rate of growth during 1891–1901 was slightly larger than the rate of growth during 1881–1891. In this connection, and to avoid possible error, it may be well to remind readers that the increase of a population is governed by two things—(1) the balance between births and deaths, and (2) the balance between immigration and emigration. The increase of population due to the excess of births over deaths is called the Natural Increase, and this is independent of any increase that may be caused by the excess of persons coming in to live over persons going away to live. Now, although our total increase during 1891–1901, in England and Wales, was a higher rate of increase than during 1881–1891, this fact was not caused by a growth in the rate of our Natural Increase, as above defined. It was due to a growth in the second-mentioned factor of an increase in population —namely, to the excess of immigrants over emigrants.

Indeed, far from there having been any growth in the Natural Increase of the population of England and Wales during 1891–1901, there has been a fall in this source of growth of population since 1881. This is shown by the following statement, which sets out the gain per cent., by excess of Births over Deaths—that is, the Natural Increase of population :—

Period.	England and Wales. "Natural Increase" of population, per cent., during each period.
1871–1881	15·1
1881–1891	14·0
1891–1901	12·4

The continuous fall in our birth-rate is responsible for this result. And this fall has been sufficient to outweigh the simultaneous fall in the death-rate which has occurred.

This important result of the 1901 Census should be noted, for it fully corroborates the statements made by me and by other persons as to the serious fall in our birth-rate during recent years. Moreover, this fall in the birth-rate is to a large extent confined to classes removed from the masses, for the masses, by the too lavish administration of our Poor Law system, are practically encouraged to increase and multiply.

TABLE B.—Area and Population of the United Kingdom* in 1901, distinguishing Sexes.

	Areas in Statute Acres.†	Enumerated Population in 1901.		
		Persons.	Males.	Females.
	Millions of Acres.	Millions of Persons.	Millions of Males.	Millions of Females.
England and Wales	37·3	32·5	15·7	16·8
Scotland . . .	19·5	4·5	2·2	2·3
Ireland	20·7	4·5	2·2	2·3
United Kingdom .	77·5	41·5	20·1	21·4

* Not including islands in the British seas.
† These areas include inland water, but not tidal water or foreshore.

We come now to the Area upon which our population lives. Table B contains the facts, and it also distinguishes the sexes of the population in each Division of the United Kingdom. Our area is officially measured by acres, a word which meant originally an open, ploughed, or sowed field, and whose meaning was gradually lost after the acre was made a definite measure of surface, in the reign of Edward IV.

We note that the area upon which our population lives is slightly larger in Ireland than in Scotland, and that the area of England and Wales is nearly twice as large as the area of Scotland; and that in each Division of the United Kingdom there are more females than males.

The reasons why there are, and have always been, more females than males in our

TABLE C.—The Nature of the Area in England and Wales.

Nature of Area.	Acreage.	Percentage of Total Area.
	Millions of Acres.	Per Cent.
Permanent pasture or grass . .	15·40	41·3
Woods, plantations, nursery grounds, houses, streets, roads, railways, waste grounds, etc. .	6·05	16·2
Corn crops	5·89	15·8
Mountain and heath land used for grazing	3·56	9·6
Clover and grasses under rotation	3·26	8·7
Green crops	2·51	6·7
Bare fallow	·34	·9
Flax, hops, and small fruit . .	·12	·3
Inland water	·20	·5
Total area of England and Wales	37·33	100·0

country, although year after year fewer females than males have been born, are that the mortality of males is greater than that of females, that there are always considerable numbers of native males temporarily absent from the country, and that more males than females are lost to the country by emigration.

As regards the nature of our area, particulars are given for England and Wales in Table C. Many persons will be surprised to see that only 16 per cent. of the total area of England and Wales is devoted to houses, streets, roads, railways, etc.; and even this small 16 per cent. includes woods and plantations. This fact makes us think that even our conditions of nowadays are not so very far away from those of Elizabethan days, when Shakespeare wrote—

My bosky acres and my unshrubbed down.

Concerning agriculture, which up to 1901 still remained our leading industry, although sadly fallen from its high estate, we have in Table C striking evidence of the extent to which we have substituted permanent pasture for corn and other crops. This unsatisfactory feature is, one hopes, in course of being altered by the trend of public opinion in favour of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals, which, if adopted, will, among other advantages, be a step towards the defence and the rehabilitation of our premier industry—British Agriculture.

Now come the various sorts of areas into which England and Wales are divided for civil, administrative, registration, ecclesiastical, and other purposes. These different kinds of areas are surprisingly numerous, and they are summarised in Table D.

More than 35,000 divisions of area in England and Wales! And each with its own functions and activity, civil, ecclesiastical, administrative, registrative, etc. What a vast amount of work this means, quite apart from the ordinary industrial work of the country!

As regards some of the divisions of area in Table D, it is practicable and interesting to give particulars as to increase or decrease in population.

For example, taking the fifty-five registration counties. During 1891–1901, the population increased in forty-five and decreased in ten of these counties. The rate of increase per cent. was highest in Middlesex, Essex, Glamorganshire, Surrey, and lowest in Cornwall, Cumberland, Pembrokeshire, and Shropshire. And of the ten counties where the population decreased, the English counties were Huntingdonshire, Rutlandshire, Westmorland, Oxfordshire, Herefordshire.

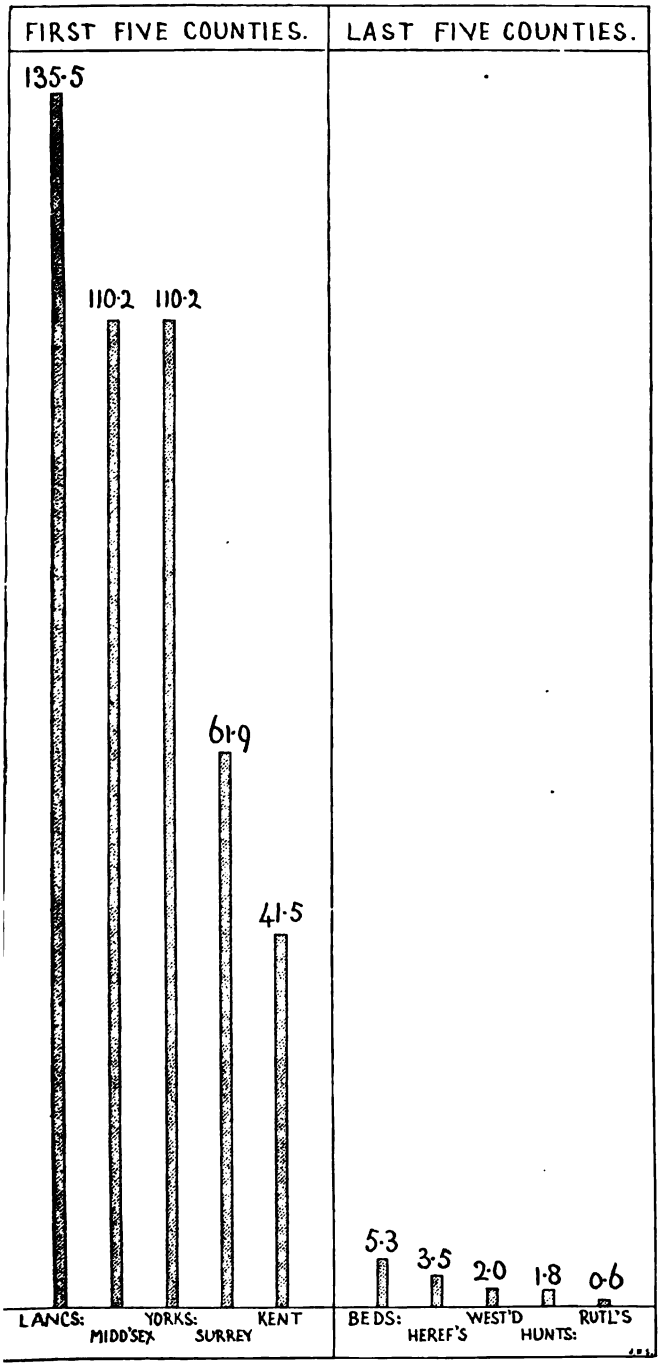
The net result is that the counties showing the highest rates of increase of population mainly include those counties around London; counties in which the chief industry is coal-

TABLE D.—The Various Areas into which England and Wales are Divided, for Civil, Administrative, Registration, Ecclesiastical, and other Purposes.

These are, in England and Wales:—	
14,900	Civil Parishes.*
14,080	Ecclesiastical Parishes.
2,064	Registration Sub-Districts.
1,122	Urban Districts (including 316 County or Municipal Boroughs) with the Wards of those which are subdivided into Wards.
784	Petty Sessional Divisions.
664	Rural Districts.
635	Registration Districts.
500	County Court Districts.
468	Parliamentary Areas.
67	County Boroughs.
62	Administrative Counties.
55	Registration Counties.
54	Ancient, or Geographical, Counties.
54	County Court Circuits.
35	Ecclesiastical Dioceses.
28	Metropolitan Boroughs with their Wards.
11	Registration Divisions.
2	Ecclesiastical Provinces.
35,535	

* NOTE.—Of these civil parishes, 25 are without inhabitants.

mining, or counties which are chiefly manufacturing. The counties which show a decrease of population are principally agricultural counties.



II.—THE RELATIVE POPULATIONS, PER 1,000 OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES, OF THE ANCIENT, OR GEOGRAPHICAL, COUNTIES OF ENGLAND. THE FIRST FIVE COUNTIES AND THE LAST FIVE COUNTIES. *See Table F.*

Concerning the 14,900 civil parishes in Table D, these differ greatly, both as regards area and population. Nearly one-half of all these parishes have populations between 100 and 500 persons. Their populations are summed up in Table E.

We see in Table E that more than 60 per cent. of all these parishes had a population of under 500 persons.

Although the ancient, or geographical, counties have, for most purposes, given place to administrative counties, a certain interest of sentiment attaches to these old English counties marked on every map of England. For this reason I show in Table F how every 1,000 of the population of England and Wales was distributed in 1901 among the various ancient, or geographical, counties.

Lancashire, which leads in cricket, also leads in population. No fewer than 135 persons per 1,000 persons in England and Wales live in this northern county palatine. Middlesex and Yorkshire tie for second and third places, and then, with a large difference, comes Surrey.

It is worthy of note, in connection with Parliamentary representation, and for other reasons, that nearly one quarter (246 per 1,000) of the whole population of England and Wales, live in Lancashire and Middlesex combined. And that nearly one-half of the whole population (497 per 1,000) live in one or other of the *six* leading counties, Lancashire, Middlesex, Yorkshire, Surrey, Kent, and Staffordshire.

As regards all England and all Wales respectively, 95 per cent. of the population live in England, and 5 per cent. live in Wales,

TABLE E.—The Population of the 14,900 Civil Parishes in England and Wales.

Population of Civil Parishes in 1901.	Number of Civil Parishes in each Group of Population. (a)	Percentage of (a) to Total Number of Civil Parishes.
	Civil Parishes.	Per Cent.
Under 100 persons	2,176*	14·6
100, and under 500 persons	6,987	46·8
500, and under 1,000 persons	2,399	16·1
1,000, and under 5,000 persons	2,411	16·2
5,000, and under 10,000 persons	413	2·8
10,000, and under 50,000 persons	405	2·7
50,000, and under 100,000 persons	58	0·4
Over 100,000 persons	51	0·4
Total	14,900	100·0

* Including 25 parishes that had no population.

Concerning some of the other counties, we note that Devonshire's share of the population is 20 per 1,000, slightly more than is possessed by Gloucestershire and Derbyshire; that Cornwall has, approximately, one in every 100 of the population; that Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire rank close together with under 6 per 1,000; and that little Rutlandshire takes the last place with under one person per 1,000 of the population of England and Wales in 1901.

In connection with the relative depopulation of rural districts, which has been going on for many years, a carefully adjusted * table is shown in the Census Report, which enables me to state that in a specified rural population of nearly 5½ millions in 1891, the natural growth of that population by excess of births over deaths was 565,000 during 1891–1901. But the actual increase of this specified rural population from 1891 to 1901 was only 64,000. Thus there was a rural loss by migration from these rural districts to other parts of England, etc., of no fewer than 501,000 persons during 1891–1901, or equal to a loss of nearly one person in ten of the rural population existing in 1891.

Some very interesting results are given in regard to the populations of the seventy-five great towns of England and Wales (including London) which, in 1901, each had a population exceeding 50,000 persons. These great rowns range from London (Administrative County of London), with 4,536,541 persons, to Burton-upon-Trent, with 50,386 persons, in 1901.

* That is, adjusted so as to make rural districts in 1901 comparable with rural districts in 1891.

The information concerning these great towns is condensed into Table G, which shows how our great towns compare with each other on the score of population.

The total population of the seventy-five great towns in Table G was 14,506,863, and the population of all England and Wales was 32,527,843. Thus, no fewer than 45 per cent. of the whole population in 1901 were living in these great towns.

In the seventy-five towns, looked at as a whole, the population increased during 1891–1901 by 14·0 per cent., as compared with an increase of 12·2 per cent. for the whole population of England and Wales. It should here be noted that these town populations in 1891 and in 1901 are in each case based upon the same area for each town, the necessary adjustment of area having been duly made.

Every one of these towns, except Huddersfield, shows an increase since 1891, but the rates of increase vary greatly. The town with the highest rate of growth during 1891-1901, is East Ham, whose population was

TABLE F.—The Relative Populations per 1,000 of the Total Population of England and Wales of the Ancient, or Geographical, Counties of England. [*See Diagram* II.]

Ancient County.	Population per 1,000.	Ancient County.	Population per 1,000.
	Per 1,000		Per 1,000
Lancashire . .	135·5	Cornwall . . .	9·9
Middlesex . .	110·2	Monmouthshire .	9·0
Yorkshire . .	110·2	Wiltshire . . .	8·4
Surrey . . .	61·9	Cumberland . .	8·2
Kent. . . .	41·5	Berkshire. . .	7·9
Staffordshire .	38·0	Hertfordshire .	7·7
Durham . .	36·5	Shropshire . .	7·4
Essex . . .	33·4	Dorsetshire . .	6·2
Warwickshire .	27·6	Buckinghamshire	6·0
Cheshire . .	25·0	Cambridgeshire .	5·9
Hampshire . .	24·5	Oxfordshire . .	5·6
Devonshire . .	20·3	Bedfordshire . .	5·3
Gloucestershire	19·5	Herefordshire .	3·5
Derbyshire . .	19·1	Westmorland .	2·0
Sussex . . .	18·6	Huntingdonshire	1·8
Northumberland	18·6	Rutlandshire . .	0·6
Nottinghamshire	15·8		
Somersetshire .	15·6	The above forty English Counties	947·1
Lincolnshire .	15·3		
Worcestershire	15·0	All Wales. . .	52·9
Norfolk . . .	14·1		
Leicestershire .	13·3	All England and Wales	1,000·0
Suffolk . . .	11·8		
Northamptonshire	10·4		

TABLE G.—The Population of the Seventy-Five Great Towns in England and Wales.

The Seventy-Five Great Towns of England and Wales. (Arranged in the order of their Populations in 1901.)	Population in 1901.
	Population.
London (Administrative County)	4,536,541
Liverpool	684,958
Manchester	543,872
Birmingham	522,204
Leeds	428,968
Sheffield	380,793
Bristol	328,945
Bradford, West Ham, Kingston-on-Hull, Nottingham, Salford, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Leicester	200,000 and under 300,000
Portsmouth, Bolton, Cardiff	150,000 and under 200,000
Sunderland, Oldham, Croydon, Blackburn, Brighton, Willesden, Rhondda, Preston, Norwich, Birkenhead, Gateshead, Plymouth, Derby, Halifax, Southampton, Tottenham	100,000 and under 150,000
Leyton, South Shields, Burnley, East Ham, Walthamstow, Huddersfield, Swansea, Wolverhampton, Middlesborough	90,000 and under 100,000
Northampton, Walsall, St. Helens, Rochdale	80,000 and under 90,000
Stockport, York, Aston Manor, Reading, Hornsey, Devonport	70,000 and under 80,000
Coventry, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport (Mon.), Ipswich, Hastings, West Bromwich, Warrington, Grimsby, West Hartlepool, Hanley, Wigan	60,000 and under 70,000
Bootle, Bury, Barrow-in-Furness, King's Norton and Northfield, Smethwick, Rotherham, Wallasey, Handsworth (Staffs.), Stockton-on-Tees, Tynemouth, Great Yarmouth, Burton-on-Trent	50,000 and under 60,000

NOTE.—In the groups of towns, the town with the largest population comes first in each group, and the town with the smallest population comes last; the intervening towns being stated in order of their population.

nearly three times as large in 1901 as in 1891.

In the four towns that stand at the head of the list in Table G, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, the rate of increase during 1891–1901 was less than the rate of increase throughout England and Wales. But this falling off in the rate of increase of a large town is not necessarily any indication of a corresponding decline in its prosperity. It means, probably, that within the legal limits of the town, space is wanted for business purposes to such an extent that dwelling-houses are used for business purposes, and consequently the inhabitants have to seek residences in suburbs outside of the legal boundaries of the town.

For instance. In London (the Administrative County, which is an aggregate of the City of London and twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs), the population increased during 1891–1901 by only 7·3 per cent., a rate much below the rate of growth for England and Wales as a whole—12·2 per cent. A considerable part of the population who cause London's business activity has probably gone to live in the more distant suburbs which are not included in the Administrative County of London. And similarly with other big towns. In the actual City of London, the depopulation of this very centre of London, and of the British Empire, has gone on more rapidly during 1891–1901 than in the preceding ten years.

As regards "Greater London," which means the City of London and the Metropolitan Police Districts, the population now exceeds six and a half millions, and the rate of growth during 1891–1901 was not less than 16·8 per cent., as compared with a 12·2

TABLE H.—Density of Population, England and Wales, 1801–1901. [*See Diagram* III.]

Date of Census.	No. of Persons per Square Mile.	No. of Acres per Person.	Proximity per Person in Yards.*
	Persons.	Acres.	Yards.
1801	152	4·20	153
1811	174	3·67	143
1821	206	3·11	132
1831	238	2·69	123
1841	273	2 35	114
1851	307	2·08	108
1861	344	1·86	102
1871	389	1·64	96
1881	445	1·44	90
1891	497	1·29	85
1901	558	1·15	80
Compare			
1801	152	4·20	153
1901	558	1·15	80

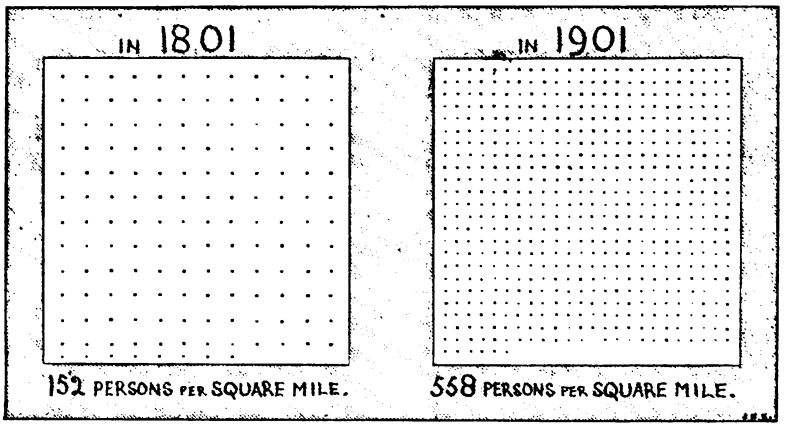
* This proximity means the distance in yards from person to person, supposing all the population to be equally distributed throughout England and Wales.

per cent. rate of growth throughout all England and Wales.

As regards the ecclesiastical provinces, dioceses, and parishes, into which England and Wales are divided, I may say, briefly, that the population in the 25 dioceses of the provinces of Canterbury is 21·7 millions, and 11·0 millions in the 10 dioceses of the province of York.

The inhabitants in the most populous of the dioceses number 3·6 millions in London, 3·0 millions in Manchester, and 2·3 millions in Rochester (largely a Metropolitan diocese), while the least populous dioceses are Sodor and Man 54,752, Hereford 215,271, Bangor 221,520, and St. Asaph 288,175.

Concerning the 14,080 ecclesiastical parishes in England and Wales, 39·1 per cent. of these had under 500 inhabitants each, 19·2 per cent. had from 500 to 1,000 inhabitants, 26·2 per cent. had from 1,000 to 5,000 inhabitants, and 15·5 per cent. had more than 5,000 inhabitants each parish.



III.—THE GREAT INCREASE IN THE DENSITY OF POPULATION, ENGLAND AND WALES, 1801–1901. *See Table H.*

We now come to the important matter of density of population. Table H contains the facts for England and Wales throughout the whole century of Census-taking, 1801–1901.

Table H shows plainly how great has been the increase in the density of our population during 1801–1901. And if we compare 1801 with 1901, the contrast is striking. In 1801, there were only 152 persons to one square mile in England and Wales; in 1901, there were 558 persons to each square mile: nearly four times as many. In 1801, there were 4·2 acres per person; in 1901, only 1·15 acres per person. In 1801, the nearness of person to person was 153 yards; in 1901, only 80 yards separated person from person. [*See note to Table* H.]

What great meaning has this increase in the density of our population! What a sharpening of wits by the much closer contact of human brains; what a gain in activity, intellectual and commercial, is hidden under this decrease in the average distance of person from person; what an increase in the opportunity for fraud,* and what a chance for the increase of well-doing, are covered by this increase to 558 persons per square mile! and, as I believe, what great benefit, moral and material, has, on balance, come to our people from this increase in their nearness to each other! Crime and wickedness have touched lower depths than in 1801, no doubt; but, on the other hand, goodness and humanity have reached a higher level, and, on the whole, they have prevailed.

The degree of density of population does, of course, vary greatly in different parts of the kingdom, the aggregation of the inhabitants being determined by the presence or absence of large towns or centres of industry, and by the character of the land or by the uses to which the land is put.

Some of the most sparsely inhabited counties of England are Westmorland (only 82 persons to a square mile), Rutlandshire (130), Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Cumberland, the North Riding of Yorkshire, and Shropshire; while, on the other hand, in 1901 there were in London 38,705 persons to a square mile, in Middlesex 3,410, in Lancashire 2,346, and in Durham 1,171 persons to a square mile.

Concerning the houses in which our population live. The number of inhabited houses in England and Wales, in 1901, was 6·3 millions. This is an increase of 809,000 inhabited houses since 1891, or equal to an increase of nearly fifteen per cent. during

* Fraud is greatly on the increase. See my paper, "The Growth of Fraud," *Contemporary Review*, June, 1902.

TABLE J.—Sex Distribution in England and Wales, in 1901. Number of Females per 1,000 Males. The Ten Lowest Registration Counties and the Ten Highest Registration Counties.

The 10 Counties having the Lowest Proportion of Females to Males.		The 10 Counties having the Highest Proportion of Females to Males.	
County.	No. of Females per 1,000 Males.	County.	No. of Females per 1,000 Males.
	Females.		Females.
Radnorshire . .	890	Cardiganshire .	1,260
Glamorganshire	937	Sussex . . .	1,202
Monmouthshire	947	Somersetshire .	1,159
Durham . . .	972	Cornwall . . .	1,151
Northumberland	994	Gloucestershire .	1,150
Denbighshire .	996	Bedfordshire. .	1,135
Brecknockshire .	1,000	Middlesex . .	1,130
Flintshire . .	1,000	Surrey . . .	1,126
Staffordshire. .	1,009	Devonshire . .	1,119
Rutlandshire .	1,009	London . . .	1,118
All England and Wales, 1,068 Females per 1,000 Males.			

1891–1901. This is the highest rate of increase since 1831–1841.

The average number of persons per inhabited house declined from 5·32 persons in 1891 to 5·20 in 1901, showing a further decline from the proportion at previous Censuses. There are, of course, certain qualifications to be noted in this connection, when we wish to consider the matter of the housing of the population—such, for example, as the size and capacity of the average "house" at different periods. If the cubic capacity of houses, speaking generally, increased during 1891–1901, as was probably the case, the above-stated decline in the number of persons per house understates the improvement in the housing of the people. A full investigation of this important matter, in the admirable Report I am condensing, leads to the conclusion that there is satisfactory evidence of distinct improvement in the housing of the people during 1891–1901. As regards London, it is evident that the London population was better housed in 1901 than in 1891, although in many parts of the Metropolis obvious overcrowding still calls for further action by Local Sanitary Authorities.

Brief reference was made in Table B to the distinction of sex, in connection with England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, respectively. I now state some of the sex-facts in regard to England and Wales. In 1901, there were 1,068 females to every 1,000 males—a female excess of 1,070,617. But if we take into the account the number of males temporarily absent (soldiers, sailors, etc.), and so get at the population *belonging* to England and Wales, the result is only 1,050 females per 1,000 males, or a female excess of 793,420.

The proportion of females to males in England and Wales was 1,057 per 1,000 males in 1801. After fluctuations during 1801–1851, the proportion of females to males has risen continuously since 1851, the proportion of females to males in 1891 and in 1901 being the highest on record (1,064 per 1,000 males in 1891, and 1,068 in 1901).

The sex proportion of the population varies widely in different parts of the country, and these local variations of sex are determined in the main by social and industrial conditions independently of local variations in the sex proportion at birth—an unsolvable mystery.

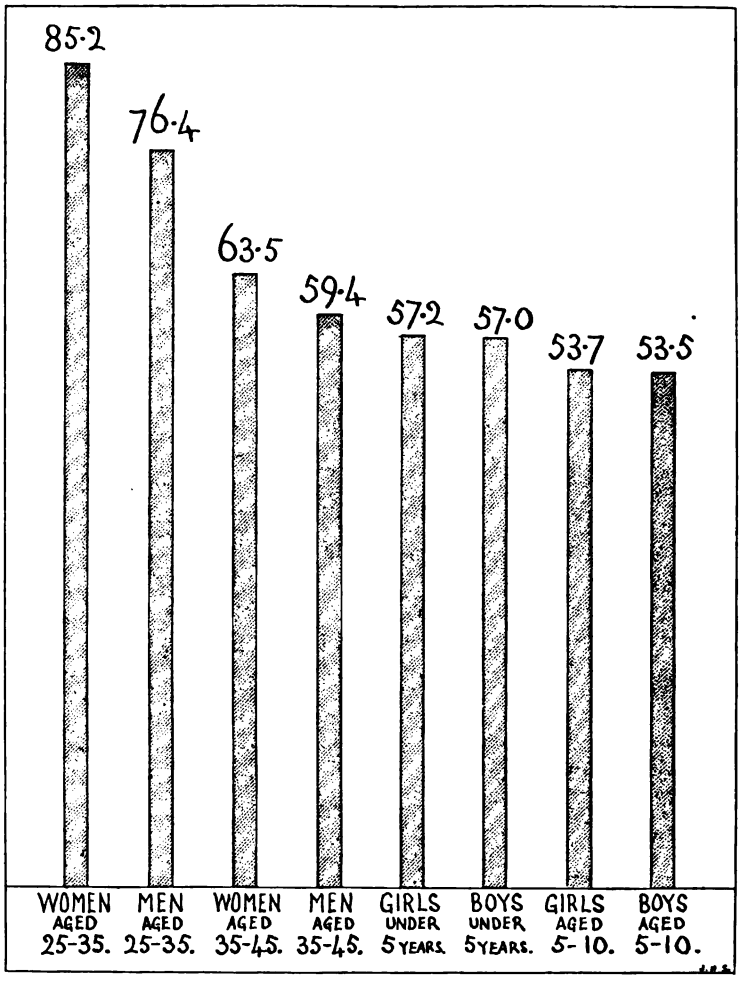
Table J states the ten registration counties in which the proportion of females to males was lowest, and the ten counties in which the female proportion was highest.

We may note that the counties with the

TABLE K.—Males and Females at Twelve Groups of Ages, in 1,000 Persons of All Ages. England and Wales, 1901. [*See Diagram* IV.]

Ages.	1,000 Persons of all ages were distributed as follows:—		
	Males per 1,000 Persons of All Ages. (*a*)	Females per 1,000 Persons of All Ages. (*b*)	Persons per 1,000 Persons of All Ages. (*a*) + (*b*)
	Males.	Females.	Persons.
Under 5 years. . .	57·0	57·2	114·2
5 to 10 years. . .	53·5	53·7	107·2
10 to 15 years. . .	51·4	51·4	102·8
15 to 20 years. . .	49·4	50·4	99·8
20 to 25 years. . .	45·2	50·7	95·9
25 to 35 years. . .	76·4	85·2	161·6
35 to 45 years. . .	59·4	63·5	122·9
45 to 55 years. . .	42·9	46·3	89·2
55 to 65 years. . .	27·9	31·8	59 7
65 to 75 years. . .	14·7	18·4	33·1
75 to 85 years. . .	5·1	7·0	12·1
85 years and upwards	0·6	0·9	1·5
All Ages	483·5	516·5	1,000·0

lowest proportions of females are, almost without exception, the seats of mining industries. Among those counties with the highest proportions of females, London, Devonshire, Surrey, Middlesex, and Sussex are to a great extent residential counties in which large numbers of domestic servants are employed; in Bedfordshire there are manufacturing industries which employ large numbers of women; Gloucestershire and Somersetshire contain large residential towns and also industries in which females engage; while in the case of Cornwall the large excess of women—1,151 women per 1,000 men—is probably due to emigration of men to South Africa and to other mining countries.



IV.—THE EIGHT MOST IMPORTANT AGE AND SEX GROUPS IN THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1901. SHOWING THE NUMBER IN EACH GROUP, PER 1,000 OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES. *See Table K.*

The sex-distribution of the population and its age-constitution are important factors in many social questions—such, for example, as the education of children, recruiting for the Army and Navy, the provision for old age, the administration of the Poor Law, and many other things.

As regards ages. Not until the Census of 1841 was statement of age made compulsory, and then only within certain age-groups. At all subsequent Censuses the "age last birthday" has been required—but not always obtained from females of a certain age. However, the ingenious checks used by the Census authorities prove that the returns for 1901 show a marked improvement on those for 1891 in regard to the statement of age. The Report contains very full information as regards age, for age with sex may fairly be considered the key to vital statistics, upon the careful use of which much more of the actual work and legislation of the country depends than is usually recognised.

Table K shows how, on the average, each 1,000 of the population of England and Wales was composed—as regards sex, and as regards the ages of each sex—at the Census of 1901.

It is not practicable here to explain the ingenious methods by which errors of age, accidental or intentional, are rectified by the Census authorities; and I show Table K as an interesting summary of the age and sex constitution of the typical 1,000 persons in England and Wales.

Among the lighter uses of a table of this sort, is the use of it by a seller of wares of any sort to the public. For he can see at a glance the relative importance numerically

of the particular sex, and of the particular age-group of each sex, for which his wares are intended.

For example. Table K shows that the most important group of the population, numerically, is the group of women at ages 25–35, of whom there are eighty-five per 1,000 persons in England and Wales. The six most important groups, numerically, are as follows :—

	Per 1,000 Persons of All Ages.
1. Women aged 25–35 . . .	85·2
2. Men aged 25–35	76·4
3. Women aged 35–45 . . .	63·5
4. Men aged 35–45	59·4
5. Female children at ages under 5 years	57·2
6. Male children at ages under 5 years	57·0
Total	398·7

These six most important groups of males and females, out of the twenty-four groups of males and females shown in Table K, account for no fewer than (nearly) 400 of every 1,000 persons of all ages in England and Wales—a sufficient proof of their social importance.

At every group of age, except at ages 10–15, females are more numerous than males. At ages 10–15, the sexes are practically equal, although if shown in greater detail than in Table K, the males would, to a most trivial extent, very slightly outnumber the females at ages 10–15. As the age increases, so do males become less numerous in proportion to females. Male mortality is considerably higher than female mortality.

For the purpose of speaking in general terms, the whole population may be divided into two sections—children below the age of fifteen years, and persons above age fifteen. The younger group have increased by only 3·67 per cent. during 1891–1901, and the older group by as much as 16·74 per cent. during 1891–1901. This remarkable fact is due to the low birth-rate. And note this. If the low (and artificial) birth-rate is to continue,* the more rapid growth of 16·74 per cent. just mentioned will, in future, be limited to a section of the population which will be above twenty-five years of age in 1911, above thirty-five years of age in 1921, and so on. Should the present slow rate of increase of births continue, this slow rate of growth will during 1901–1911 extend to a section of the population, including all persons below twenty-five years of age. And eventually it will extend over the whole population. Moreover, when this slow rate of growth has begun to affect the section of the population at ages over twenty years (thus affecting all the reproductive section of the population), a further decrease in the birth-rate must be looked for, with still slower growth of population by the "Natural Increase" of births over deaths.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of this lowered birth-rate, which has now been operating for a considerable period, with the effects in the near future quoted in the preceding paragraph. We want white British population for the efficient maintenance of the British Empire. And if undue luxury and love of ease are—as it seems—causing the deliberate de-naturing of the birth-rate in these Islands, this is a source of great weakness, whose full effects will come to light only in the future: as the effects of this lowered birth-rate work out upon the population in the way stated just now. You may say "Pooh! that is only a matter of calculation!" That is so. But also it is a matter of solid fact that time will prove to be true.

But my space contracts, and I must pass on to the condition of our population as to marriage, or civil, condition.

The civil condition of the population of England and Wales in 1901 is stated in Table L.

The most important class in Table L is made up of unmarried females; this class includes, of course, female children. And we see that in each of the three descriptions of civil condition, unmarried, married, or

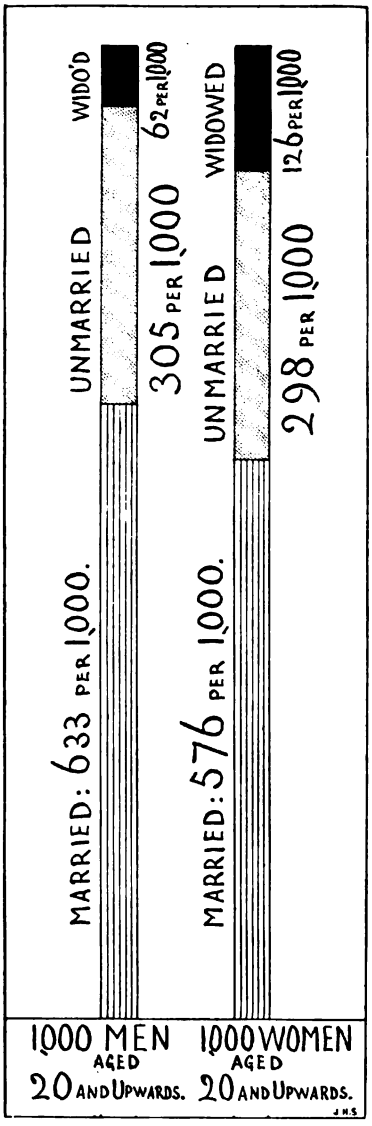
TABLE L.—The Population of England and Wales in 1901, distributed as regards Marriage, or Civil, Condition.

Description of Persons.	Number of Persons in each Group.	Percentage of Persons in each Group.
		Per Cent.
Unmarried females .	9,830,000	30·2
Unmarried males .	9,570,000	29·4
Married females . .	5,720,000	17·6
Married males . .	5,610,000	17·3
Widowed females .	1,250,000	3·8
Widowed males . .	550,000	1·7
Total population of England and Wales	32,530,000	100·0

* See my article in the *Fortnightly Review* for June, 1901, and other articles by me on this most important matter.

widowed, the females exceed the males. This is notably the case as regards widowed persons.

Assuming that the designation "Married" was, in every case, correctly claimed on the



V.—SHOWING THE MARRIAGE, OR CIVIL, CONDITION OF ALL MEN AND WOMEN, AGED 20 AND UPWARDS, IN THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1901. PER 1,000 MEN AND PER 1,000 WOMEN. *See Table M.*

night of the Census, there were then 110,000 husbands absent from the country—in some cases, possibly, for the reason that they had cause to regard marriage as other than the "civil condition" claimed for it in the official returns.

Table L makes no distinction as regards age. This is done in Table M, which shows the civil condition of all persons in England and Wales, aged twenty and upwards, per 1,000 of each sex.

Looking back at the facts similar to those in Table M, for the years 1881–1901, I see that among persons aged twenty and older, the proportion of unmarried men and women has steadily increased, and that the proportion of married and widowed men and women has steadily decreased. The fall in the marriage-rate during the last twenty years is the probable cause of this result.

Passing much interesting information as to marriage condition, we come to occupation.

Even in 1801, when the population of England and Wales was under nine millions, the importance of grouping the people under broad industrial headings was recognised,

TABLE M.—The Civil Condition of all Males and Females, respectively, *aged* 20 *and upwards*, per 1,000 of each Sex. England and Wales, 1901. [*See Diagram* V.]

Description of Persons.	Males in each Group, Per 1,000 Males.	Females in each Group, Per 1,000 Females.
	Per 1,000.	Per 1,000.
Unmarried .	305	298
Married . .	633	576
Widowed .	62	126
Total .	1,000	1,000

and at each successive Census endeavours have been made to obtain more accurate information on this point.

In 1901, in order to obtain proper classification of the many thousands of nominally different occupations under which people described themselves, a dictionary of occupations was prepared, which contained over 15,000 occupational designations, duly classified.

The general summary, as regards occupied and unoccupied persons, is shown in Table N. This relates only to persons over ten years of age.

Nearly 84 per 100 of all males over ten years old were occupied, and nearly one-third of all females over ten years old were occupied.

As regards unmarried females, more than half (52·3 per cent.) of all the unmarried females over ten years old were occupied. And, concerning married or widowed women, 87 per 100 of all married or widowed women were returned in the unoccupied class.

The proportions of occupied persons vary greatly with age. Among males, the proportion occupied differs but little at the ages between 20 and 55 years, the actual maximum being reached at ages 25–35, where 98·3 per cent. of all males at these ages are occupied. The lowest proportion of occupied males is at ages 10–15, where 21·9 per 100 males of those ages are occupied. At ages 75 and upwards as many as 39 per 100 of all males at these ages are occupied.

As regards unmarried females, the maximum occupation rate is at ages 20–25, where nearly 75 per cent. of all unmarried women at those ages are occupied. Even as late as ages 55–65, no less than 45 per cent. of all unmarried women at those ages are occupied.

As has been shown in Table N, the occupation-rate of married or widowed women is small. The maximum is reached at ages 55–65, where 17·5 per 100 of all married or widowed women at those ages are occupied. Probably these women are mostly widows.

Concerning the nature of the occupation, Table O gives a condensed statement of the occupation of males, showing the number in each occupation per 10,000 males over 10 years of age.

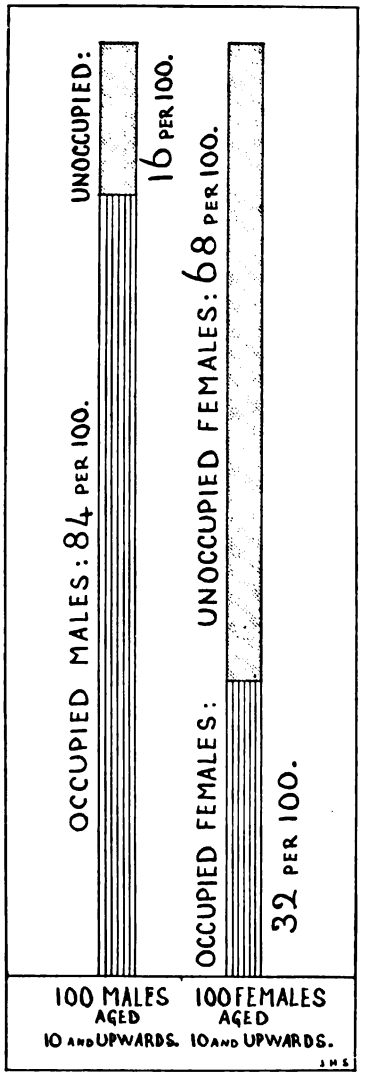
Table O shows that the leading occupation is the conveyance of persons, goods, or messages. Of every 10,000 males, at ages over 10 years, no fewer than 1,029 are occupied in conveyance—more than one in ten.

Agriculture ranks third, with 8·8 per 100 males (see the Note to Table O). Food, etc., occupies 6·4 per 100 of all males aged over 10 years, a proportion that is equalled by the mining industry. Commerce uses only 4·4 per 100 of all males aged over 10 years. Professional occupations account for 2·6 per 100 of these males. The Government and the defence of the country each use 1·4 per 100 of all males aged over 10 years. Table O is interesting, but I must leave it, and show, in Table P, similar results for the occupations of females.

Table P shows that the leading female occupation is domestic indoor service, which claims slightly over 10 per 100 of all females aged over 10 years. Domestic service is for women what the conveyance service is for men (see Table O). The other details of Table P are worth attention.

The occupation section of the Report is one of the most interesting in the volume. It is dealt with in most thorough fashion and is well worthy of detailed study.

There is one more feature of the Census Report that must be briefly mentioned; and that is connected with the Parliamentary Areas into which the country is divided. Examination of this part of the Report shows the urgent need for a measure of



VI.—SHOWING, FOR ALL MALES AND ALL FEMALES, RESPECTIVELY, AGED 10 AND UPWARDS, IN THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1901, THE NUMBERS WHO WERE OCCUPIED AND UNOCCUPIED, PER 100 MALES AND PER 100 FEMALES, AGED 10 AND UPWARDS. *See Table N.*

Redistribution of Seats in the House of Commons. The number of Members for the 468 Parliamentary areas in England and Wales, exclusive of the Universities, is 490, and an equal numerical distribution of the population would therefore give one Member to 66,383 persons in 1901, as compared with

TABLE N.—The Proportion of Occupied and of Unoccupied Males and Females, respectively, per 100 of each Sex. England and Wales, 1901. [*See Diagram* VI.] (*Limited to Persons aged over* 10 *years.*)

Description.	Males of each Description, per 100 of all Males aged over 10 years.	Females of each Description, per 100 of all Females aged over 10 years.	Further Particulars concerning Females.	
			Unmarried Females of each Description, per 100 of all Unmarried Females aged over 10 years.	Married or Widowed Females of each Description, per 100 of all Married or Widowed Females.
	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Occupied . . .	83·7	31·6	52·3	13·2
Without specified occupations or unoccupied	16·3	68·4	47·7	86·8
Total . . .	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

NOTE.—The whole of Table N relates only to persons over 10 years of age.

one Member to 59,189 persons in 1891. The number of constituencies in England and Wales which contain a population of from 60,000 to 70,000 persons, thus covering the average population represented by one Member, is only 77 out of the whole 468 constituencies! All the other constituencies are either under-represented or over-represented in the House of Commons, many of them to a very considerable extent.

One does not, of course, urge an exact method of representation upon this numerical basis, but, broadly speaking, this basis would seem to be a just one. And, at present, Parliamentary representation is far removed from even an approximately close accord with representation of the people based upon the number of them in each constituency.

I must stop. The space allotted to me

TABLE O.—The Number of Males in each Occupation, per 10,000 Males at Ages over 10 Years. England and Wales, 1901. (*Limited to Males aged over* 10 *years.*)

Occupations (arranged in the order of their numerical importance).	No. of Males in each Occupation, per 10,000 Males, at ages over 10 years.
	Per 10,000.
Conveyance of persons, goods, and messages	1,029
Workers in metals, machines, implements, and conveyances	942
*Agriculture—on farms, woods, and gardens	883
Building and works of construction	859
Workers in and about mines and quarries	638
Food, tobacco, drink, and lodging	638
Commercial occupations	437
Workers and dealers in dress (including drapers, linendrapers, mercers)	397
General labourers; factory labourers (undefined)	357
Workers in textile fabrics	330
Professional occupations and their subordinate services	257
Workers in wood, furniture, fittings, and decorations	169
Domestic outdoor service	148
General or Local Government	141
Defence of the country	139
Workers in paper, prints, books, and stationery	123
Domestic indoor and other services	102
Engine-drivers, stokers, firemen (*not* railway, marine, or agricultural)	88
Other workers	455
Other dealers	238
Total Occupied	8,370
Unoccupied	1,630
Total	10,000

* NOTE.—The above Table relates to groups of occupations, which are not identical with industries. As regards the separate industries of the country, as distinct from the above groups of occupations, agriculture was, in 1901, still at the head of the list.

has already been exceeded. But there is much more of great interest and value in this most admirable Report. It is indeed a monument of careful, thorough, and cleverly thoughtful work, and the wonder to me is that it has been got ready so soon as 1904. The authors * have indeed justified their adoption of the maxim quoted on the first page of this too scanty digest. Readers of this magazine, who are believed to take more than a merely frivolous interest in the affairs of their country, should get this Report, and study it. Ask your bookseller for Blue Book [Cd. 2,174], price 2*s.* 8*d.*

* The Report is signed:—William Cospatrick Dunbar, Registrar-General. Noel A. Humphreys. John Tatham, M.D., F.R.C.P. Alfred J. Mundy, Secretary. Archer Bellingham, Assistant Secretary. It is dated 1st July, 1904.

TABLE P.—The Number of Females in each Occupation, per 10,000 Females at Ages over 10 Years. England and Wales, 1901.

(*Limited to Females aged over* 10 *years.*)

Occupations (arranged in the order of their numerical importance).	No. of Females in each Occupation, per 10,000 Females, at ages over 10 years.
	Per 10,000.
Domestic indoor service	1,009
Workers in dress	524
Workers in textile fabrics	450
Shopkeepers, dealers, and others engaged in commercial pursuits (including assistants). (Dress, food, etc.)	221
Laundry and washing service	149
Teaching	131
Board, lodging, and dealing in spirituous drinks	94
Charwomen	85
Professional occupations (other than teaching), including General or Local Government	61
Workers in paper, prints, books, and stationery	57
Sick-nurses, midwives, and invalid attendants	51
Workers in metal, machines, implements, and conveyances	45
Agriculture, on woods, farms, and gardens	44
Commercial, bank, insurance, and law clerks	43
Others engaged in service (not under other heads)	39
Workers in food	25
Other workers	135
Total Occupied	3,163
Unoccupied	6,837
Total	**10,000**

SOME POTATOES AND A WOMAN.

By MAYNE LINDSAY.

"HE told me to go to Spain."

"Oh! he's a vile bounder. I wish we could afford to let him stew in his own juice. Did you—er—argue with him?"

"Argue!" Billy Dykes, less well known as Major William Dykes Dykes, Sub-Commissioner to the Lost Tribes of the Borderland, became empurpled by the blushes of indignation. "Argue!—I begged him—I give you my word for it, I did no less—begged him to send the woman down to Peshawar. 'For Heaven's sake, Keefe, pack your wife across the Border!' I said."

"No more?" said the Warden of the Marches, with a twinkle.

"Not then. I told him the Grey Fakir was on the warpath; I made him acknowledge that he knew the tribesmen were simmering, and I drew a faithful picture of what might happen if Karabgur emptied itself (as it undoubtedly will before long) upon—what does the beast call his pigsty?—upon 'Killarney.' 'Twasn't till he cheeked me beyond bearing that I told him I wished the Lost Tribes would curry his beastly leather hide and be quick about it. I don't *think* I said anything stronger than that."

"'M! 'm-m-m!" muttered the Warden. He puckered the eyebrows above his shrewd blue eyes, and stared long and thoughtfully at the mountain-tops. "Diplomacy has failed, Billy."

The consultation of the powers took place in the mess-room of a frontier outpost. The mess-room was also orderly-room, drawing-room, smoking-lounge; it was a mud-walled shanty that made a top-knot to the sturdy square fort, and was itself embellished by the fluttering Union Jack above its roof-tree. The fort was perched upon a mountain-elbow, with a slender finger of telegraph-wire stretching southward to the comparative civilisation behind it, and with its face set above the cleft of the Tungi valley, and its thread of rapid-scored river. It held an impregnable position, and it looked scornfully at the scarred and desolate hill-country beyond, where men were rude and disrespectful and unsavoury, and where there existed an affection for Martini-Henrys—yea, and, if possible, for Lee-Metford rifles, with the ammunition appertaining thereto—that was unwavering and boundless, passing altogether the love of woman.

Pennycuick, the Warden, who was a captain of gunners, and whose command embraced the garrison of the fort—Sikh artillerymen, a handful of Pathans, and the subalterns Head and Fairweather—mused upon the problem. It was a delicate one: the muscles of a hundred and fifty soldiers did not solve it; and Pennycuick was unaccustomed to other methods of nut-cracking.

Two years before, Michael Keefe, after release from service in the ranks of the Scaramouches, had returned to Northern India with a scheme and a legacy. His company had once picnicked in the Borderland, and as the war that then threatened fizzled out miserably, Private Keefe had had opportunities for rumination. He found, accidentally, that a wedge of earth among the hillsides reminded him, in colour and consistency, of his mother's potato-patch. Keefe was sentimental. He retrospected. There were reasons why the soil of Ireland would never see his foot again. He left with his company, after having knit, possibly through a kindred instinct of savagery, bonds of friendship with the Lost Tribesmen, and he went to England, time-expired, still sentimentally ruminating.

He met a little Cockney in London, married her, claimed his legacy, and returned with both possessions. After which he crossed the border below Pennycuick's fort, greeted his tribesmen friends with salutations and barter, picked up the location of the wedge of earth once more, and began to build a house and sow seed-potatoes, eight rocky miles beyond the Indian border.

It was not a matter of concern to anyone if a time-expired individual, of indifferent character, got his skull cracked when the Lost Tribes thought they had rediscovered a *casus belli*. But you must not let an Englishwoman, though her accent be triply that of Seven Dials, be exposed to risk of hideous murder. Pennycuick told Dykes, and Dykes wrote a letter to Keefe, warning him as to his own peril, and demand-

ing his wife's return to British territory, on the ground that the Sub-Commissioner was responsible for a countrywoman's safety. He received an answer headed "Killarney Potato Estate, near Karabgur, Borderland," in which Mr. Keefe remarked, in laboured handwriting, that he would look after his wife's safety himself, and would "thrubble"

"Keefe gave popular cooking demonstrations."

Major Sub-Commissioner Billy Dykes to mind his own wife. And this was uncivil, because Mrs. Dykes was hundreds of miles away, having a glorious and expensive time in Simla.

They could not be removed, and it was not expedient to interfere with them. The Lost Tribes had developed a partiality for Irish potatoes, and Keefe gave popular cooking demonstrations in the wood-fire ashes, and drove a roaring trade with the men of fifty villages. The first lesson that a Sub-Commissioner is taught is never to interfere with tribal customs. And almost before news of Keefe's down-sitting had reached the ears of Pennycuick, jacketed potatoes had become a tribal custom. They were even laid as burnt offerings before the little local gods; and the priests, who eat what the gods cannot conveniently manage, spread it abroad that the successful smuggling of rifles which ensued was due to the persuasive powers of the new comestible. After that an enforced vacation of the Killarney Potato Estate would have become a frontier problem.

Mr. Keefe remained a thorn in the side of the Sub-Commissioner for two years—in fact, up to the time at which my story opens. The tribesmen were unusually quiet; Billy Dykes had never known such long-continued tranquillity. So long as they lay low, he could afford to blink the truth about the Keefes' victorious campaign. But lately the Grey Fakir had stalked abroad, a sniper had dropped a bullet into Fairweather's hat—only luckily Fairweather was not underneath it—and nightly watch-fires were beginning to prick out and grow upon the hilltops.

They were quiet no longer. There was going to be a row. Potatoes might possibly save Keefe, a captive to the tribesmen's greed; nothing would save Mrs. Keefe, who had already laughed openly at some of their funny little ways. Mrs. Keefe was a savage herself, a London savage, which implied a lower and more unblushing depravity, in some points, that even the Lost Tribes knew how to touch. What would be her fate? Dykes shuddered at the answer.

"I say——" the Warden of the Marches

was beginning, when he came back from his gloomy thoughts.

"Well?"

"Where's Keefe?"

"Keefe? I left him more in anger than in sorrow, perched on a scraggy little Kabuli, with the shortest stirrup-leathers you can picture. He was going to ride to the interior—two days in. So he said."

"And Mrs. Keefe?"

"At home alone, as usual. It's infernal! . . . Come in!"

Head entered. He was a boy of pleasing and cherubic looks; a boy whom a wise Government probably considered safer in the neighbourhood of the Lost Tribes than in that of Anglo-Indian frivolities.

"There's a wire from Fort Ishmael, sir. The *budmashes* are out in Barakand. There's no news of a likely attack this way, but some of the Karabguris are expected to cross the pass and join in if our people want them."

"Oh! There is no muster in force here. Driblets of the young bloods—that is what they'll get, unless the Grey Fakir orders a *jehad* presently. Wire back: 'All quiet here; no demonstration beyond that of last report.'"

Head vanished. Dykes returned to the interrupted conversation.

"Well, this settles it. That woman must be fetched out of the mess—by force, if necessary."

"Just what I was thinking," said Captain Pennycuick. "She must be fetched out. Yes; but who's going to do the fetching?"

"Send the lads. Nice little afternoon's excursion for them. Can't you picture Fairweather trying to make light conversation?"

"I don't think it's much of a joke," the other man said slowly. "The creature has the pluck of a cornered rat. She'll scream, and she'll fight, and she will have to be got out by main force; and then, if Keefe chooses to be nasty—and he has a fertile imagination—there will be a very pretty romance for him to take to headquarters. It's a woman, you see. And Head—well, poor Head is not a diplomatist, and he has hitherto looked upon a petticoat as the raiment of an angel. You wouldn't undeceive him?"

"In short, subalterns must be like Cæsar's wife. But then—then, my dear fellow, then——"

They stared at each other. There was now no twinkle in the Warden's eye, but there was disgust and a wondering irritation, such as you may see in a horse's dilated pupils when it cannot make up its mind whether to jib or to fly the unwelcome obstacle.

Dykes sank back into a chair.

"Oh! confound the Keefe family! Pennycuick, we are both married men. I suppose experience ought to count."

"Our wives weren't born in Whitechapel," Pennycuick said. "We shall have to do it, that's certain."

Dykes nodded mournfully and appeared to be ransacking his memory.

"It's awkward," he said. "And I have no reassuring remembrance of having, at any time or under any circumstances, induced a woman to follow the dictates of prudence and go where she would rather not. Have you?"

II.

THE Borderland, never hospitable, draped itself in cold, grey clouds, and speckled the landscape with snowflakes. The brown, bare rocks were slippery with slush; the gorges were pierced by icy breezes; the mountain streams, by whose banks the trail threaded, and on whose edges the ponies tripped and slid, were black and swollen—swift with the melted snow of distant avalanches.

"In England," the Sub-Commissioner said ruefully to the Warden, as they climbed further and further into the chilly desolation—"in England, people would have muffins and hot tea on an afternoon like this, and roaring fires. In England—or even in Simla."

"It's only the muffins that are missing. We'll have tea and toast when we get back," said Pennycuick. "P'r'aps Mrs. Keefe will have some ready for us."

Dykes muttered something that was not a blessing.

"There *is* the potato-patch!" were his first audible words.

Pennycuick pressed his pony after him, nose to tail, and a moment later a thatched building, that was too unkempt to be called a bungalow, and too European to be a tribesman's hut, stole into view round the corner of a bluff. The hillside behind it was scratched with cultivation in untidy strips; the rude fence at the side, which might prevent an explorer from plunging over the adjacent precipice, was adorned by fluttering flags, grey and scarlet. Dark objects, rooting and slow-moving, were visible in the background.

"It's an Irish peasant's cabin," Penny-

"She had a swing of arm that hurled the portable property in the cabin with a fierce precision."

cuick said, as they approached. "What's the decoration on the rail?"

"Washing," Dykes replied. "Grey for Keefe, his shirt; red for Mrs. Keefe's petticoat. We'd better get off here. I say, the pigs are in the potatoes!"

They neared the shanty with their arms through their bridles. There was a reluctance to make their presence known, but Providence relieved them of that difficulty.

A woman, awhirl with hurrying skirts, spun out of the shanty's only door and fell upon the pigs, taking a lean and hideous sow in the flank with a broomstick. A gust of Cockney execrations piped down to the onlookers. It was mingled with the shrieks of

the sow and with a lower-pitched chorus of squeals and grunts. The attack was so fierce and impetuous that the enemy fled incontinently to the four winds, and a mob of galloping pigs hurled itself into the downward path and tilted at the barrier presented by the ponies and their Englishmen.

Pennycuick, the hindmost, escaped by skipping, with an agility that surprised himself, to and fro among the herd. Dykes, on the contrary, stood his ground, and was rewarded by receiving the onslaught of the father boar. It caught him just below the knees with stunning impact, and as Mrs. Keefe faced about to survey the stricken field, she saw the Sub-Commissioner rising bespattered from the slush below her, and the Warden, his face flaming and his cap askew, flinging himself upon the plunging ponies.

"Aow! Grycious!" said Mrs. Keefe. "Wot's this 'ere? Lor', if it isn't Billy Dykes and Chuckfarden!"

Pigs, and the monstrous familiarity of the address, smote Dykes into dumbness for a full thirty seconds. He gasped, casting about him for speech, until the sound of a smothered chuckle from the Warden behind him let the tied tongue-strings loose. The whole thing was grossly incongruous and absurd; it was out of keeping with a Sub-Commissioner's sense of the fitness of things, with the wildness of the sentinel hills, the lonely grandeur of the valleys, the savageness of wind and weather. Mrs. Keefe, her cabin and her pigs, were monstrosities in the face of a landscape that Nature had rough-hewn in heroic mood. The encounter was altogether outside reason and experience.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Keefe," Dykes said coldly. "We have come to see you on a very special mission, and these beas—I mean, your pigs took us by surprise on arrival."

"Ho, indeed!" commented Mrs. Keefe. Her feet were planted now upon her own threshold, and arms were well akimbo, in the favourite attitude of the London Amazon. Her face was heavy with suspicions. Her eyes, under a tousled fringe, darted from one man to the other. "Yuss!"

"I suppose Keefe is not back yet?" Dykes continued. For the moment he wished that he were, heartily.

"P'r'aps 'e is, and p'r'aps 'e isn't. Wot's that ter do wiv you?"

"Don't be foolish, Mrs. Keefe. I'm asking in your own interests. The Border is in a very unsettled state. I have just had news that renders it more than ever necessary that your husband and you should immediately seek the fort's protection."

"Aow! 'Ave yer? Well, yer can tell that to Mr. Keefe when 'e gets home. I ain't a-goin' to budge wivout 'e says it; I know a trick too much for that. Why don't you make they niggers skip, 'stead of insultin' respeckable lydies? Call yerselves orficers? . . . Blessed lot of good you is for orficers! I cud do all the work you're any use for on me 'ead, any d'y."

She disappeared with a click, like a Swiss clock's cuckoo, behind the door of the shanty, and Dykes was left blankly staring at the spot she had vacated.

"I'm glad she doesn't do her own work that way," murmured Pennycuick. "I'm respectable, too."

"Eh? what?" The Sub-Commissioner turned upon him. "Confound your silly jokes! You said once before this was not going to be a laughing matter, and it isn't, by Jove! What the dickens is to be done *now?*"

"Looks to me as if we've got to take the position by assault," the Warden said gently. "She's deaf to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely."

"I've done the talkee-talkee. You chip in now with your assault."

"Wha-a-t! Take precedence of my senior officer? Couldn't do it, Billy. Try a further parley through the window. I saw the ginger fringe flaming behind it just now."

Dykes hesitated and seemed inclined to wrangle. He pulled himself together, however, advanced to the unglazed window, and appealed to invisibility.

"I must beg you to return with us, Mrs. Keefe. It is a matter of life and death. The"—he choked over the title—"the Estate may be overrun by the Karabgaris at any hour, and for you to stay here is madness. You are fortunate to have escaped harm so long. You risk your life, I repeat."

Silence.

"I ask you to come with us voluntarily. If not, we shall be obliged to use force. Surely you won't invite us to that?"

"Invite yer!" Invisibility became suddenly endowed with language. "Try it on, my ducky. Jess you try. The first of yer 'at puts his beak inside 'ere will get wot-for, and that's a solid fack. There's invitin' for yer. Garn!"

"It is horrible!" Dykes said in a low tone, as he turned to Pennycuick, and the cabin's

interior was once more wrapped in silent defiance. "It is useless to argue with the little beast, and we can't afford to lose any more time. We'd better smash the door in, hadn't we? Or do you suggest getting in by the window?"

"The door, I think," the Warden said, rubbing his chin. "She may have red pepper or boiling water ready to repel besiegers, and crawling in a limb at a time would be painful work. We'd better ram the door together, dodge the saucepans, take an arm apiece, and run her down the hill."

It was done. It was not an experience that Dykes or Pennycuick were likely to refer to. They locked, indeed, the incident into their bosoms,

"He had been chased for an eternity by a boisterous section of the Lost Tribes."

and they decline to admit, even to this day, that two British officers had perforce to stand up to an angry woman, and that they received a considerable drubbing before the enemy hauled down her flag in surrender. Mrs. Keefe had lived for two years in the breezy mountain-land, she had exercised her muscles daily by climbing paths upon which a goat would move warily, and she had a swing of arm that hurled the portable property in the cabin with a fierce precision. They could not lift their hands to a woman; they could only, following the Warden's word, dodge the missiles when the splintered door lolled upon its wooden hinge, and the reek of the shanty's interior smote throats and noses.

Dykes caught a bouncing *dekchi* (cooking-pot) against his defending forearm, snatched it as it dropped to earth, and slung it outside the battlefield. Pennycuick, less lucky or less handy, drew back in time to prevent a knife from doing worse than skin his temple, and he is not to be blamed that he swore as he cast it rearward. For the ensuing seconds the air rained household utensils following one upon the other with an incredible swiftness;

sometimes they were parried and sometimes they struck, but the aim was always true. They cast them behind them as quickly as their hands could turn, till the outer earth was strewn, and till their arms and shins and faces bore witness, each and all, to the power of the oppressor.

The method of their silent madness dawned at last on Mrs. Keefe, and the fire slacked. She dropped a rude shovel in mingled shame and derision, and embarrassment burnt brick-red in her cheeks.

"Strike me blind!" she said, staring and hanging back. The two men waited, and Pennycuick took his handkerchief out of his sleeve and dusted his coat. He had a scratch on one cheek, and it did not improve him. "Well, I—never!" Then, launching herself forward with ostentatiously empty hands—"There! I'm done. Let's get out o' this. . . . I didn't suppose you'd take it *that* w'y. . . . D'yer think I want to pl'y Aunt Sally?"

Dykes could not forbear one gibe at the Warden in the hour of triumph when they rejoined the escort, and Mrs. Keefe heaved herself on to a led pony, jerked the reins, and defiantly led the way through the whirling snowflakes to sanctuary.

"I don't think," he said, swinging leg over saddle and fumbling for the off-stirrup, "that young Head's conduct of the matter could have excelled that of present company, 'charm he never so wisely.' Eh, Pennycuick?"

The Warden pretended not to hear. As a matter of fact, his ears were full of the ejaculations that drifted back on the breath of the biting wind, from the head of the column.

"Never lifted a blessed finger.—Stood like a pair of Chiney figgers.—Why, if it had been Keefe!——an' they call thesselves orficers. . . . Well, gimme pline men. Torfs w'ys is too 'igh class for me. Like strikin' a couple of bybies. . . . If it *'ad* a-bin Keefe——!"

She was still reviewing their incredible behaviour with half-audible comments, when the fort frowned upon them. It engulfed her, meek as the patriarch, and Dykes and Pennycuick fled in opposite directions, to wipe their faces and escape the eyes of subalterns.

* * * * *

Twenty hours later, Keefe arrived at the gates of the fort and clamoured for admission. He had been chased, as it seemed to him, for an eternity, by a boisterous section of the Lost Tribes, and there was the graze of a Martini bullet on his cheek. He had fled by ravine and goat-path, in hunger and the buffets of the elements, through the protracted terrors of the night. He cringed into safety, a creature so miserably cowed that he listened without blows to the language of Mrs. Keefe when she elicited the fact that he had not been home to look for her.

"There, look at 'im!" she wound up triumphantly, waving her hand to indicate Dykes, who crossed the field of vision at that moment. "Soft-sawdered kind o' mug, ain't 'e? Wouldn't think 'e could kill a fly, would yer? 'E couldn't, neither. But he jolly well sived my life, 'e did. An' you——!"

She scratched her elbows with a gasp of scornful indignation. Words had failed.

Long after the Keefes had gone southward, the scouts of a little British Army came upon the charred ruins of the Killarney Potato Estate. The tribesmen had razed it to the ground, and in its ashes they had roasted, profiting by the careful instruction they had received, the last of Keefe's potatoes.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

TO OBLIGE!

"WOULD you mind standing a little further away, young man? I keep confusing your waistcoat with the draught-board."

TOMMY: Don't you think the other side of the street would be better walking?

GRANDPA: It looks like it.

TOMMY: Then why not go over there?

GRANDPA: No use; it's always better walking on the other side.

BROWN: What did you gain in your deal with Smith?

JONES: A great respect for Smith's business ability.

TESS: I don't see how she can be happy with a man like that.

JESS: Oh, but she says he's another man since he's been married.

INSTRUCTOR (in despair): Well, at least you can tell me where the Magna Charta was signed?

STUDENT (cheerfully): Oh, yes! King John signed that at the bottom.

EASTERN TOURIST: Hear those men whooping and yelling and cursing! What in the world is all that frightful row about?

BRONCO BILL: Oh, some of the boys *would* start discussin' religion.

TRAMP: This morning a cook gave me a piece of cake to eat and some wood to chop up, but I had to take 'em back and ask her if she'd mind if I ate the wood and chopped the cake.

"Did you see me making a fuss over his baby?"

"Yes; how much do you owe him?"

TERENCE: Wimmin is moighty similar in one way.

NORA: An' phwat's thot, me dear?

TERENCE: No matter how many of them you git acquainted wid, they're all aloike in being different from wan another.

EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

DOUBTFUL PATRON: Do you photograph in colours?

PHOTOGRAPHER: Yes, but I can powder your nose, sir.

A COLD IN THE HEAD.

MY brain is as fertile to-day as was Henty's,
It teems with ideas for *chefs d'œuvre* in
their twenties,
And yet in the act of expanding a plot
I'm alternately cold or unpleasantly hot,
While my thoughts are deprived of all semblance
of thread;
Which fact doesn't prove I'm a drone. I'm
not lazy,
But somehow seem mentally parched, dull and
hazy:
My zeal says, in theory: "Compose; cover
reams
With artful exploitings of intricate themes"—
Yet I merely dilate on the cold in my head!

How versatile, too, am I suddenly feeling!
I'm panting to start an immediate dealing
With topics beyond my habitual sphere
(*Bird Life in the Midlands* and *Social Veneer*),
And I'm equally anxious to throw off some
verse,
Inscrutable, powerful, something like Browning,
Or scholarly parody's classical clowning.
In vain; long before I can end Stanza One
I recognise clearly the lines do not run,
And my second attempt reads decidedly worse.

'Tis strange when we mortals would mount to
Parnassus
The Fates should thus always be set 'gainst
(alas!) us.
But now, see, my foot's on the ladder of Fame,
And for once they shan't smile o'er their
dastardly game,
Nor stamp out the fire inspiration has fed.
Oh, a treatise I'll write to create a furore,
Hold critics in ecstasies singing the glory
Of what, as a bombshell, I'll hurl from my
desk
With red realism, intense, Zolaesque,
And its title will be "On a Cold in the Head."

Herbert Westbrook.

THE LAST WORD.

"GIVE us a bite of yer apple, Billy."
"Shan't."
"Well, leave us a bite of the core."
"There ain't going to be no core."

A MAN AND HIS FEET.

"NICE sort you've got there, Smithers."
'Yes, and I don't mind telling you, I bought him out of a tradesman's cart."
"Oh! I thought he seemed very quiet between the shafts!" (*Note Smithers' pedal extremities.*)

"WELL, Tom, now you've had a second quarrel, I suppose your wife will be packing up and going to her mother?"
"No such luck, Bill. Her mother's coming here!"

MRS. BREEZLY: Do you believe those stories about men selling their wives?
BREEZLY: Oh, I don't know; there are some fools who would buy anything!

A PLEASANT AFTERNOON WITH A YOUTHFUL GENIUS.

THE milk of human kindness is apt to be spoiled y too much skimming.

"How long does it take one to get admitted to ıe Bar?"

"Oh, you can walk right in on week-days, but takes longer on Sundays."

HE: Look here, Matilda, I'm not quite such a fool as I look.

SHE (soothingly): No, dear, I'm sure you're not.

MRS. BROWNE: If I had my life to live over again, I would marry you, after all.

BROWNE: I don't know about that.

"I TOLD the doctor that his bill was exorbitant, and when he expostulated, I said he'd either have to cut it in two or find something else the matter with me."

PRISCILLA: The mistakes of my life have been many.

PENELOPE: What do you mean?

PRISCILLA: There are lots of men that I ought to have married, but didn't.

THE PELICAN'S BALL.

JUST after dark, in Regent's Park,
The Pelican gave a ball,
And a dainty note, by the Nanny Goat,
She sent to the animals all.
The Cockatoo, in a skirt of blue,
Came with the Bumble Bee;
The Crocodile, with expansive smile,
Waltzed with the Chimpanzee.

The Pollywog and the Prairie Dog
Made love to the Blue Baboon,
Whilst the Boar and Hind (of frivolous mind)
Sang songs to the beautiful moon.
The African Ape, in a white lace cape,
The Gnu and the Hippo Calf,
Played Kiss in the Ring with the sweet young thing—
Miss Spotty-Nose-Jane-Giraffe.

The music sweet was really a treat—
A whistle, a drum, and a horn,
With a long-drawn note from the Peacock's throat—
And they kept it a-going till morn.
With the peep of day all stole away
And went back to their dens to undress,
And the Camel said, as she slipped into bed,
She considered the ball a success.

Hazel Phillips Hanshew.

TOO CLEVER BY HALF.

CUSTOMER (to little girl who has not been quite honest in her dealings): Do you know what happens to little girls who tell stories?

SMALL GIRL: Yes, they gets off, if the stories are good enough.

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THE RETURN OF "SHE," BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

THE STORIES BY ROBERT BARR, EGERTON CASTLE, JUSTUS MILES FORMAN.

WINDSOR MAGAZINE

MAY 1905

LONDON

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No. 125

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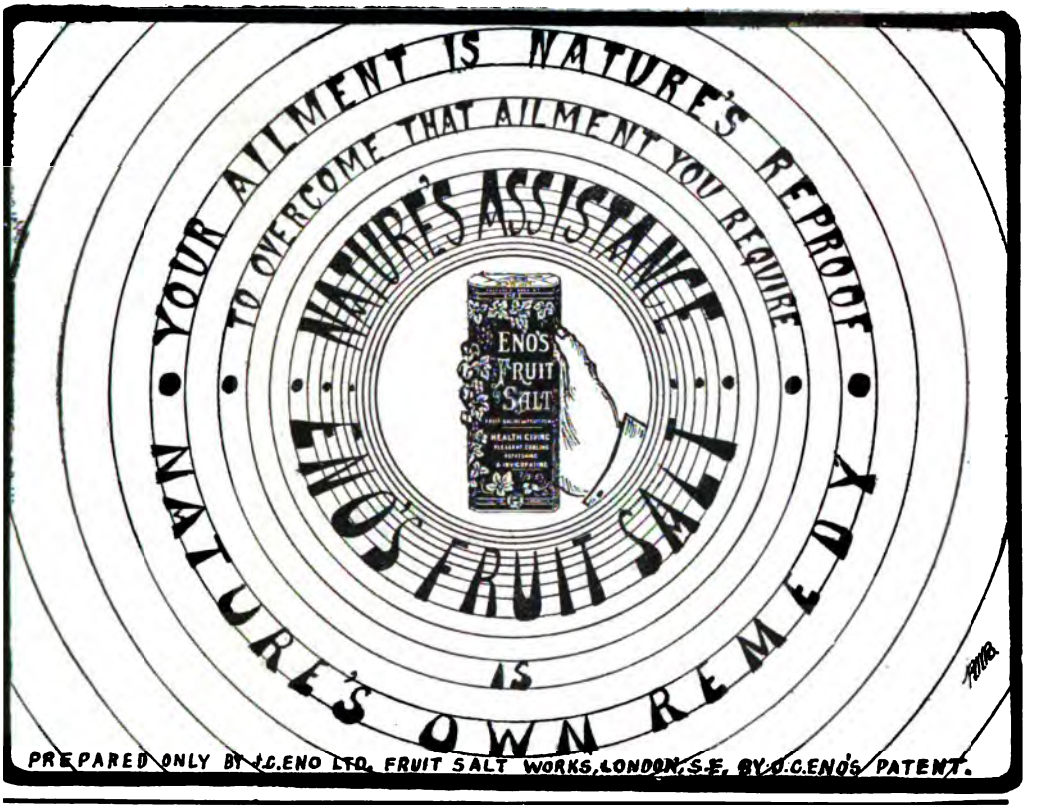

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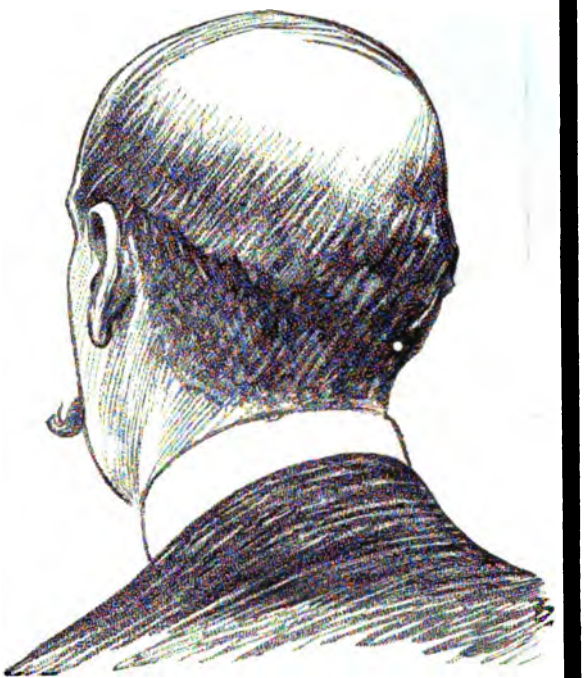

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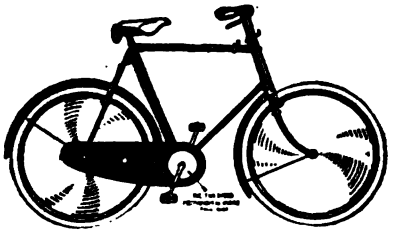

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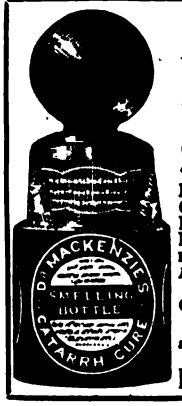

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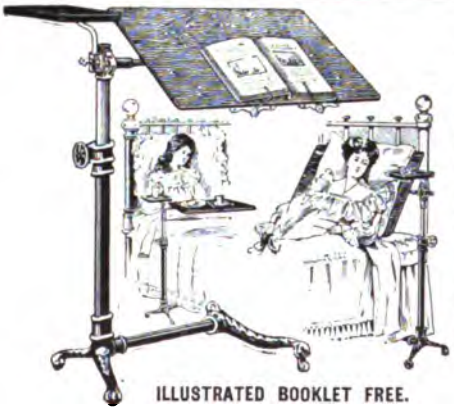

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Sufferers from such common ailments as indigestion, constipation, insomnia, loss of vigour, and nervous and functional disorders should write for Sandow's useful little book, entitled "Curative Physical Culture." It can be had, post free and gratis, on application to Eugen Sandow, Dept. B, 17, Basinghall Street, London, E.C.

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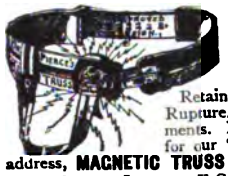

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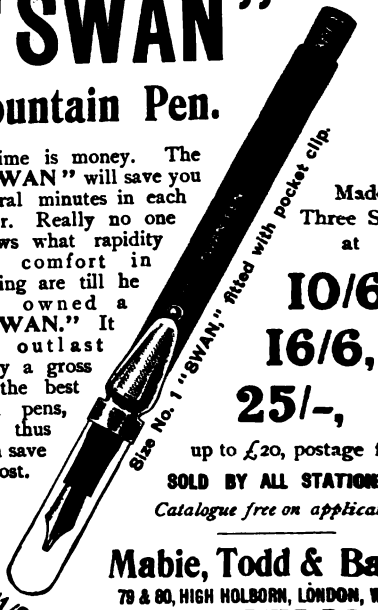

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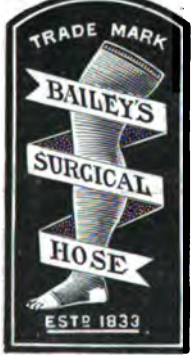

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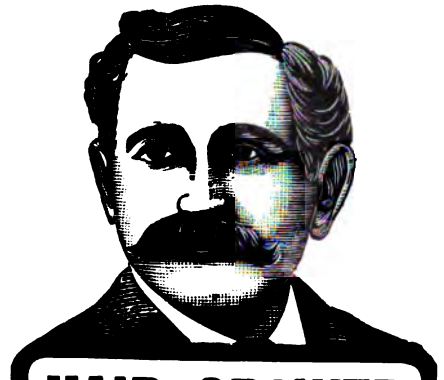

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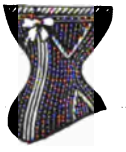

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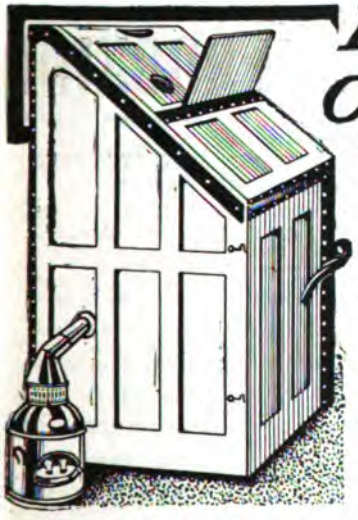

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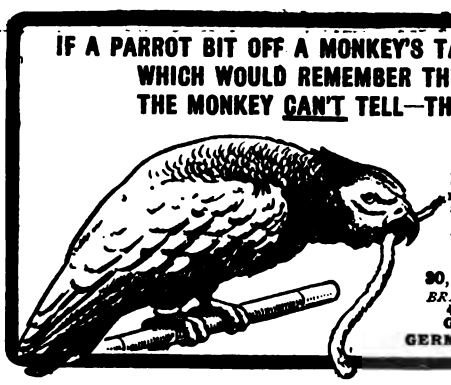

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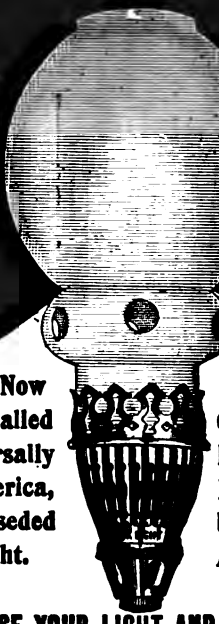

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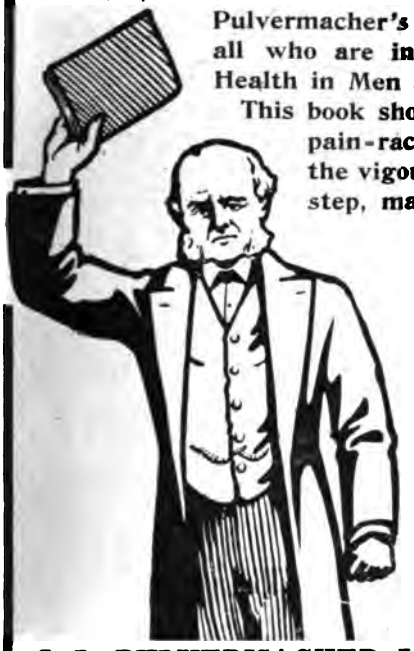

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The Windsor Magazine.

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[Facing back of plate.

THE OFFERING.

FROM THE PICTURE "EUCHARIS," BY LORD LEIGHTON.

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"THE CLOUDS THAT GATHER ROUND THE SETTING SUN." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

THE ART OF MR. SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

PAINTER AND ANTIQUARY.

By Wilfrid Meynell.

WHEN Mr. Seymour Lucas was a student of the Royal Academy, which now claims him as a Member, he made a drawing that a Haymarket dealer bought for thirty shillings. That was his first triumph—the promise of future success which Time has liberally fulfilled. Uncles are rarely dreamers; and if Mr. John Lucas—himself a painter of note—ever asked the nephew in whose artistic career he took a sympathetic interest, how much he had spent on models for this drawing, the reply must have been: "Two pounds." But young artists, like beginners in most professions, have not very much to say to arithmetic. Their successes are bought at a great sacrifice; but if there are successes, no one stops to count the cost.

It is success that makes the difference all round. It gives good temper; and even a rejection at the Royal Academy—that often dark and all but irretrievable episode—can be looked back upon with a smile, perhaps almost with the laugh of him who laughs last, when, as in Mr. Seymour Lucas's case, the second picture submitted to the Selecting Committee is accepted, the picture hung on "the line," and sold for £100. "By Hook or by Crook" was the name of the lucky canvas that adorned the walls of the Academy exhibition of 1875—the year also of "Hearts of Oak," by Hook, of Millais's "Crown of Love," Alma-Tadema's "Sculpture Gallery," Long's "Marriage Market," Leighton's "Eastern Slinger," Watts's "Dedicated to All the Churches," and Lady Butler's "Quatre Bras." Ruskin, in his revived Academy "Notes" of that year, did not give the new-comer a welcome. The picture which caught the eye of the purchaser missed that of the critic, or he might have made it illustrate the happy mean between the deadness of the letter without the spirit, and the vitality of feeling which finds no commensurate expression. Mr. Seymour Lucas has tried to get at the body and the soul of things. He is artist and antiquary. He is a "costume painter" indeed, if an accurate presentation of the dress of the period depicted constitutes costume painting; but he has not allowed his learning to smother his life. He has never been content that the

"THE KING'S MESSENGER." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

costumes filling two fine old chests in his studio at West Hampstead should deck dummies.

The Stuart cause, the Stuart tradition, is vastly indebted to the painter and the novelist. Van Dyck may be called the creator of Charles I., since he made him look a hero, as Peter Lely never did; and Walter Scott, by his pen, mustered afresh the chivalry of England against the Roundheads. Seymour Lucas was fed in youth upon the novels of Scott; "By Hook or by Crook" bears the hall-mark. A maiden of the Hanoverians is wooed by a young Jacobite, who shakes his bridle-rein and bids her adieu before going off to fight for his King. A brick wall, symbolic of the political bar, divides the lovers, who, nevertheless, find comfort in each other's sorrow.

A year later and Mr. Seymour Lucas exhibited "For the King and Cause." A mortally wounded Cavalier is seen carried, after Edgehill, by his friends, servants, and retainers, to the outer door of a country mansion, which, however, delays to open to the anxious summoners. Following on this picture came the "Intercepted Despatches," showing a Cromwellian messenger caught by two Cavaliers, and fast bound to a chair while they rip open the saddle and bring forth tell-tale papers for inspection. Other pictures of this early Cavalier group were "An Ambuscade, Edgehill," where a company of the King's troops make their cautious way along a suspected country road, the wariness of an old soldier and the rasher impatience of a young one being expressively rendered; and "As Dry as a Limekiln"—a Cavalier, *bon vivant*, gazing into an unreplenished cup.

A Londoner born, Mr. Seymour Lucas illustrated an exciting chapter in the history of his birthplace when he painted his "Gordon Riots." Old volumes of the "Annual Register" supply fascinating reading to many sorts of students. They are Pre-Raphaelite in their literalness. One remembers how Stevenson asked a faithful friend in London to send him the volumes all the way to Samoa, and the curious who compare certain passages to be disinterred from its pages with those which live in Stevenson's may be well rewarded for their pains. It is to the volume of the "Annual Register" contemporary with the "Gordon Riots" that Mr. Seymour Lucas had recourse, and this is the special passage to which he would refer the reader in elucidation of his own strongly drawn picture: "A fifth desperate and infernal gang went to

"A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

"THE REVENGE, JULY 21, 1588: DRAKE RECEIVING THE SPANISH ADMIRAL'S SWORD."

From the picture by Seymour Lucas, R.A., reproduced by permission of Mr. Thomas McLean, Haymarket, S.W., publisher of the large plate.

"THE KEEPER OF THE KING'S CONSCIENCE." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.
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the elegant house of Lord Mansfield in Bloomsbury Square, which they, with the most unrelenting fury, set fire to and consumed. They began by breaking down the doors and windows, and from every part of the house flung the superb furniture into the street, where large fires were made to destroy it. They then proceeded to his Lordship's law-library and destroyed some thousand volumes, with many capital manuscripts, mortgages, papers, and other deeds. The rich wardrobe of wearing apparel and some very capital pictures were also burned; and they afterwards forced their way into his Lordship's wine-cellars, and plentifully bestowed it upon the populace. A party of guards now arrived, and a magistrate read the Riot Act, and then was obliged to give orders for a detachment to fire, when about fourteen obeyed, and shot several men and women, and wounded others. They were ordered to fire again, which they did, without effect. This did not intimidate the mob; they began to pull the house down and burn the floors, planks, spars, etc., and destroyed the outhouses and stables, so that in a short time the whole was consumed. Lord and Lady Mansfield made their escape through a back door a few minutes before the rioters broke in and took possession of the house." More terrible was the aspect of the night. "As soon as the day was drawing to a close," says the same contemporary record, "one of the most dreadful spectacles this country ever beheld was exhibited. Let those who were not spectators of it judge what the inhabitants felt when they beheld at the instant the flames ascending and rolling in clouds from the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons, from New Bridewell, from the toll-gate at Blackfriars Bridge, from houses in every quarter of the town, and particularly from the bottom and middle of Holborn, where the conflagration was horrible beyond description. The houses that were first set on fire at this last-mentioned place both belonged to Mr. Langdale, an eminent distiller, and contained immense quantities of spirituous liquors. Six-and-thirty fires, all blazing at one time, and in different quarters of the

"LOUIS XI. VISITING A COTTAGE." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

City, were to be seen from one spot. During the whole night, men, women, and children were running up and down with such goods and effects as they wished most to preserve. The tremendous roar of the authors of these horrible scenes was heard at one instant, and

"A LIVELY MEASURE." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

"FINIS." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

at the next the dreadful reports of soldiers' muskets, firing in platoons. . . . In short, everything served to impress the mind with ideas of universal anarchy and approaching desolation. Two attempts, in the course of the day, were made upon the Bank; but the rioters were so much intimidated by the strength with which they beheld it guarded, that their attacks were but feebly conducted, and they were repulsed at the first fire from the military. They made an effort to break into the Pay Office likewise, and met the same fate. Several of them fell in these skirmishes, and many were wounded."

Very exact were the studies made by Mr. Seymour Lucas for the scene of the picture; and the same instinct for local colour took him down to Plymouth Hoe when he painted his familiar canvas "The Armada in Sight." The catalogue, which quoted Hume and Smollett, may itself in turn be quoted: "It was on the 19th of July that Fleming sailed into Plymouth and announced that he had seen the Spanish Fleet off the Lizard. The intelligence was communicated to Drake as he and some of his officers were amusing themselves with bowls on the Hoe. It caused a lively sensation, and a great manifestation of alacrity to put to sea, which Drake laughingly checked by declaring that the match should be played out, as there was plenty of time to win the game and beat the Spaniards too." To-day that game would have its stern critics in Pall Mall, and Ministers be plied in Parliament with questions about the levity of the nation's heroes.

The painter of Spain's defeat was himself to be enrolled that very same year among the prisoners of Spain. "The Spaniard," as Whistler named Velasquez, with a fine attribution of supremacy, became known to him. He had seen the work of Velasquez before,

MR. SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A., AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO.

Photo by] [*Russell and Sons.*

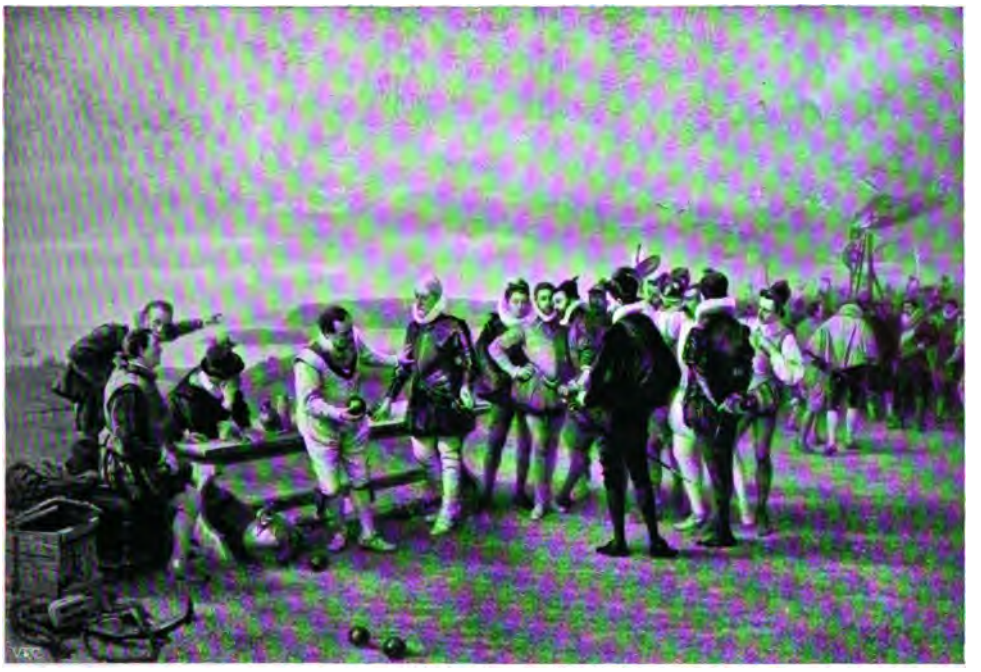
"PHYLLIS IS MY ONLY JOY." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

but with no great consequences. Now he found himself taken captive by the Master as presented in two copies hung in the studio of Edwin Long. Hitherto Van Dyck had been his exemplar; henceforth it was to be Velasquez. A few weeks later and he was himself seated in Madrid before the masterpieces of "the Spaniard." The result was not confined merely to the admirable studies and copies that he made; it was to be recognised henceforth in all his own works. His picture of "Charles I. before Gloucester" was the first indication of this forward step in painterlike qualities. A second visit to Spain preceded the exhibition of "The Favourite" in 1882. The comedy

"PETER THE GREAT AT DEPTFORD." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

and the tragedy of the situation are well realised by the painter in his delineation of the envious, the treacherous, or the merely flippant courtiers grouped about the door through which the favoured friend of the Queen emerges from audience in the inner chamber. Spain, by the way, which did so good a turn to the paint, did a very ill turn to the painter. It got him, as its way is with all travellers, into its slow railway trains; but it broke the monotony (and Mr. Seymour Lucas's leg) by a crash from which he very narrowly escaped with his life.

Cavaliers and Roundheads reappeared on



"THE ARMADA IN SIGHT: THE FAMOUS GAME OF BOWLS ON PLYMOUTH HOE, JULY 19, 1588." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

Reproduced by permission of Mr. Arthur Lucas, Baker Street, W., owner of the copyright and publisher of the large plate.

"1746: SEARCHING FOR REBELS AFTER CULLODEN." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Frost and Reed, Fine Art Publishers, Bristol, who are publishing an engraving of important size.

"A WHIP FOR VAN TROMP." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

"CHARLES II. VISITING CHRISTOPHER WREN DURING THE BUILDING OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

"A RECEPTION OF THE MOORISH AMBASSADOR BY KING EDWARD VII." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.
From the original in the collection of His Majesty the King.

Mr. Seymour Lucas's canvases, with such titles as "After Culloden," and "From the Field of Sedgmoor." Each picture has for its central interest a fugitive—a French soldier of fortune in the first, and in the second an English peasant who takes refuge from Kirk's Lambs in the cottage of his sweetheart. Long did the memory of those wolfish "lambs" linger in the wolds and downs of Somersetshire; but the dweller there to-day, a most peaceable and pleasant-spoken countryman, has harked back to the days of Alfred, to the cakes he burnt, and the cottage beneath which, according to a local tradition (tell it not to Treasure-Hunters), Alfred the Great lies buried in a golden coffin.

Another picture that may be cited as a type of this artist's choice and treatment of a subject is his "Peter the Great at Deptford." The terrible Czar who created the Russian Navy (a navy lately sailing in the shadow of death) is seen studying the "Lion," of

"THE GORDON RIOTS." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.

From the original in the Melbourne Art Gallery.

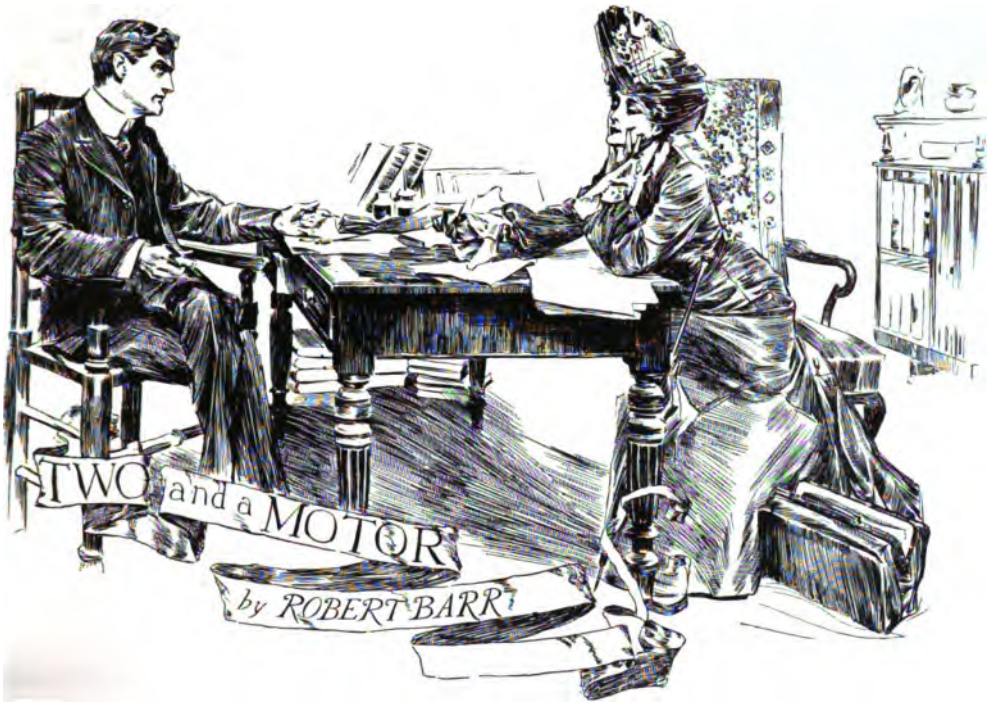
which there remains a model at Greenwich, and which was at Deptford on the occasion of Peter's visit. Evelyn's entries about that visit are inevitably recalled. In the spring of 1698, the Diarist writes: "The Czar of Muscovy being come to England, and having a mind to see the building of ships, hires my house at Sayes Court."

In one of his later works Mr. Seymour Lucas treats a subject which again recalls Evelyn. "The Reception of the Moorish Embassy by Edward VII." was happily commissioned by His Majesty. All is dignified, even sedate. But could the Moors be other than models of dignity in England? We have Evelyn's word for the behaviour of such another Embassy from Morocco. But the score of pens that got instantly to work upon Edward the Seventh's reception of the "Moores" leave no picture on our minds to rival that presented in paint by Mr. Seymour Lucas. He had painted the past a hundred times; but here, in the present, was a scene after his own heart, which was also, on this far too rare occasion in his career, a subject under his own eye. The faces and the figures he was so well accustomed to fancy and compose were here in the flesh. He had to observe rather than to construct or to create.

George Eliot somewhere says that man and wife should be of different temperaments but the same tastes. The familiar danger of a generalisation is here hardly avoided; for in unity of temperament and in diversity of taste have others found an abiding amity. Robert Browning and his wife were as unlike as poets could be; yet neither the one nor the other had been fitly, or even tolerably, mated except with a poet. But the question of a common calling for husband and wife is full of pitfalls and of platitudes. Enough to say that when Mr. Seymour Lucas married Marie Elizabeth de Cornelissen, he married a painter of particular charm; and one, moreover, literally descended from that Antoninus Cornelissen whom Van Dyck loved and painted. Another member of the Cornelissen family married into the family of another painter—married a daughter of Rubens. Somehow or other, there is a special appropriateness in the gathering together of these high memories and associations in the nobly planned studio of Mr. Seymour Lucas at West Hampstead.

[For permission to reproduce certain of the pictures included in the foregoing article we are indebted to the courtesy of the owners of the originals. In the case of "1746: Searching for Rebels after Culloden," we have to thank Messrs. Frost and Reed, art publishers, of Bristol, from whose fine engraving of the subject we were allowed to make our reproduction. Similar acknowledgment is due to Mr. T. McLean for "The Surrender of Don Pedro de Valdez to Drake," and to Mr. Arthur Lucas for "The Armada in Sight." "The Keeper of the King's Conscience" is included by kind permission of the proprietors of *The Graphic*.—ED.]

"THE HON. MRS. GODFREY WILLIAMS." BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A.



THIS is the amazing story of a frivolous young man who became suddenly and intensely interested in a certain branch of scientific investigation. Research becomes the most absorbing of pursuits, and takes hold of a man—especially a young man—like drink, or cholera, or gambling. It may be stated that the particular line of research with which we have to deal was at the same time being followed by a notably beautiful girl; but that is neither here nor there. I insist that it is science which holds us in thrall, so we may treat the girl as incidental.

First let us understand our young man. His name was J. L. Spofford, his age was twenty-six; yet he had already achieved a reputation of sorts in the newspaper and magazine world. Jack Spofford, as his associates called him, was a very modern product, keen in his profession, and up to snuff generally.

Time was when an editor sat in his chair and waited for good things to fall into his lap. He chose the best, or the worst, or the intermediate, and his periodical was good, bad, or indifferent accordingly. His position was a comfortable one, and so was his chair; but one eager day there arose another kind of editor, and from that moment our slow-going friend was out of date, although he did not recognise this at the time. The new editor was like a commander-in-chief of a hotly contested campaign. He did not wait for things, but went more than three-quarters of the way to meet them; and when an Astonishing Event, emerging from obscurity, met the new editor, the event was forthwith grasped, shaken into shape, dressed in such flowing robes of language that it sometimes was unable to recognise itself, then flung forward and presented to the world as the greatest thing that ever was. Did a doctor in Scandinavia invent a new cure for toothache, the modern editor's man with fountain pen and camera was at his door almost before the first patient's jaw had stopped throbbing. Did an intrepid traveller penetrate to the Forbidden City, he was met by the new reporter on the slope of the pass five hundred miles from the nearest telegraph-office. Was there a rumour that a scientist in France had discovered a ray that would probe to the centre of the earth, the new editor's man had it all in type before members of the Royal Society received their invitations to attend the first demonstration.

Now, Jack Spofford was not a new editor;

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he was merely one of the numerous talented young men whom the needs of the new editor had called forth. Already an interesting writer, he came, by a sort of instinct, at the popular points of any new discovery —able to write understandingly about it, even though he had never heard about it the day before. It was a modern case of ignorance being bliss, for ignorance was one of the necessary equipments of his profession. A learned scientific man will write accurately enough, but his product will be incomprehensible to the layman, and deadly dull to anyone but his peers.

Ignorance, then, is a necessary part of a young writer's stock-in-trade, because he thus appreciates the difficulties of the unlearned reader; and when he has overcome his own lack of knowledge, he is in a position to present the case lucidly on his pages. It must not be supposed that on account of this first unacquaintance with his subjects his work is therefore full of error. Just the reverse is the case. It must be as accurate as a scientific treatise and as interesting as a detective story. The young man who is able to unite these two requirements may travel all over the world free of expense to himself, receiving the remuneration of a great financier. This is the kind of young man Jack Spofford was, holding a position so important on the *Daily Argus* that there was bestowed upon him a room entirely to himself in the *Argus* building, where none of the young cubs of journalism were allowed to intrude without invitation.

Spofford sat in this room one day, leaning back luxuriously with his feet on the desk, thinking he was thinking, but certain he was smoking, when there came a timid knock at his door.

"Come in!" he roared, as a lion is entitled to do, whereupon the door opened gently, as if it had some hesitation about bringing interruption upon an inmate so important. A young woman, veiled, stood on the threshold, and Jack's feet came down with a thump to the floor, while, with equal celerity, he removed his pipe from between his teeth.

"Are you the proprietor?" she asked.

"No such luck," he replied with emphasis.

"The editor, then?"

"No; the editor won't be here till five o'clock."

His sentences were curt, and his tone proclaimed the annoyance he felt, not at the young lady, as she probably supposed, but at the Irish porter downstairs who had permitted her to come up. This useful person was adamant so far as the generality of man was concerned, but a pretty woman always had him at her mercy, and a visible proof of that fact now stood in the doorway, evidently hesitating between a desire to retire and a determination to advance.

"The one I wished to see," she continued, after an embarrassing pause, "was Mr. Spofford; but I thought perhaps I should have to obtain permission from the editor or the proprietor before calling upon him."

"No such permission is necessary, madam," replied Jack, now upon his feet; "my name is Spofford. Won't you come in and sit down and tell me what I can do for you?"

The young woman entered and took the chair he had drawn forward for her, he seating himself at his desk again, regretting his former abruptness, and wishing she would raise her veil, for her face seemed tantalisingly pretty, partially obscured though it was. She took from the bag at her side several thin, crinkly papers, on whose semi-transparent surface some plans seemed to be drawn. These she smoothed out a little nervously on the desk, noticeably at a loss how to begin. Then she plunged suddenly into her subject.

"I have read many of your articles, Mr. Spofford, and I thought perhaps you might write one on a new motor-car which my father has invented, and which he thinks will revolutionise the traction problem of to-day."

She spoke rapidly, as if reciting something she had learned by heart.

A cynical smile came to Jack's lips: he had met this sort of thing so often before, but it was trebly disappointing to find an engaging young woman acting as solicitor in a case which he looked upon as the endeavour to obtain a free advertisement—the one unforgivable crime in a newspaper office.

"Madam," he said, with some return of his former manner, "have you any idea why a great daily is published?"

"I suppose it is to give to the world the news of the day; and, besides, a great newspaper should defend the right and expose wrongdoers."

There was a certain air of finality in the laying down of these principles which rather amused Mr. Jack Spofford.

"M—m, yes," he replied, "quite so, quite so. Nevertheless, a journal like ours incurs a large expenditure of money day by day in salaries, telegraphing, and special information. This necessitates a keen eye being kept on

our advertising pages, from which comes most of our revenue. I believe there are many hundreds of motor-cars on the market, each destined to revolutionise traffic, and the proper method of proclaiming their virtues to the world is through the assistance of our advertising manager."

"But you wrote an article on the Edison battery a week or two since," she protested.

"Ah, yes, Edison is always interesting: he and I are the two great masters of fiction now before the world. The public cries for Edison, whereas it would not read the exploits of the estimable Mr. Jones, for instance."

"There was your account of the possibilities of radium," went on the girl, as if she had not heard his demurrer. "You made that subject so beautifully clear that for the first time I understood it; and I am sure if you investigated this new cell which my father has invented, you would find it equally interesting, and perhaps of much more practical use to the world."

"Your praise of my work is very gratifying," said Jack, actually blushing, although he was well aware of his own value as a writer; "but, you see, I am restricted in a measure from choosing any theme that pleases me. To tell the truth, most of my subjects are chosen for me by the editor. I am really rather helpless in the matter. If I took in to him such an article as you propose, no matter how well written it might be, he would at once ask why this did not appear in our advertising columns. If I instanced radium, he would at once reply that the moment radium became a commercial product its value from the special writer's point of view had ceased."

"Does Mr. Edison advertise, then?"

"Off-hand, I should say he's one of the greatest advertisers in the world; but, above all things, he is interesting. Then, of course, we have advertisements of Edison phonographs, Edison arc-lights, Edison incandescent lamps, and what not. Oh, yes, Edison is a valuable man from both the advertising and the literary standpoint of a newspaper."

"If I paid for a small advertisement, would you write an article on this battery?" she asked earnestly.

Spofford leaned back in his chair and laughed, then was immediately sorry he had done so, for the girl rose to her feet quite obviously offended.

"Pray sit down again," he said hurriedly; "you see now how undeserved was your compliment to my work. I have entirely failed to make the position clear to you. No, an advertisement, even if you took a page, would not have the slightest effect. An editor is the most suspicious of men, and seems to be chosen largely for that quality. He would scent a concealed advertisement in an article on the building of the Pyramids."

The girl in her excitement had pushed up her veil and taken the papers from the desk, and Jack Spofford saw that she was infinitely more beautiful than even he had imagined.

"Pray sit down and tell me about this battery. I assure you I will do everything I can towards getting such an article as you wish printed, but I want you to comprehend the difficulties that are in the way, and perhaps I have somewhat magnified them. Now, to begin with, in what respect does this differ from existing batteries?"

She sank down into the chair once more and eagerly unfolded the sheets of oiled paper.

"It is not an acid, but an alkaline battery," she said. "The positive and negative plates are exceedingly thin and light, and are placed very close together, separated by a substance which my father has invented, which gives the fluid access to the plates, but at the same time keeps them apart and prevents short-circuiting. You will understand the construction by glancing at these drawings."

He had a writing-pad before him, and his stylographic pen in his hand. He took the sheet of paper she offered to him and examined it with apparent care, looking oftener, however, at her own animated countenance than upon the mechanical drawing. However, he knew enough about electricity to comprehend the trend of her remarks, and she seemed only too willing to furnish whatever explanation was desired, although some of his questions were so elementary that the girl rather underestimated his knowledge.

"The Kemlin cell," he read from the sheet. "Is Mr. Kemlin your father?"

"Yes. I am Irene Kemlin."

"Has he made any practical application of this battery?"

"Yes, we have two motor-cars, and they work perfectly. Of course you know the great advantage of electricity over petrol. One lever practically controls the action. There is no change-speed gear necessary. Electricity is the simplest and most silent of all motive powers, and you increase or decrease the speed simply by shoving a lever backwards or forwards."

"I understand that. Now, how far will this motor-car run on one charge?"

"A little over fifty miles."

"Ah!" ejaculated Spofford, leaning back in his chair, "that is not enough. I am sorry to say anything discouraging, Miss Kemlin, but unless an electric car will do two or three hundred miles on one charge, it will not revolutionise the traction problem."

"Oh, yes, it will," she cried enthusiastically. "You see, the great advantage of this battery is that it can be recharged within ten minutes. That has never been accomplished before."

The young man knit his brows and gazed thoughtfully across at her.

"I see you are not convinced," she said, smiling at him for the first time.

He was certainly convinced of one thing—which was that this was the most bewitching smile he had ever beheld; but as electricity was the subject under discussion, he pulled himself together and endeavoured to concentrate his mind upon it.

"No, I am not convinced," he replied; "that is, I am not convinced of the practicability of the scheme, because charging-stations are too few and far between. If there were a charging-station every forty miles on even our main roads, then, as one might say, you would have something to come and go on; but anything more useless than an electric motor whose batteries are exhausted in the midst of a farming community, I cannot imagine."

"Oh, but supply always endeavours to meet demand," she argued. "Charging-stations will spring up along our roads as soon as they are called for. Remember that a few years ago petrol could not be had in a farming community, either, but now it may be obtained almost anywhere."

"'I am devoted to motoring.'"

"That is true; still," he objected, "it is easier to store a can of petrol than to spend a thousand or two erecting a generating-station. However, there is no use in anticipating the future. I have got what I want, and that's enough for the present. The difficulty I foresee with my suspicious editor is to prove to him that there are points about this frog different from any other frog, as Mark Twain says. Well, I've got the difference, which is that you can charge this battery in ten minutes, while others take hours. If the editor proves stubborn, I swear I'll resign and

transfer my valuable services to one of the opposition papers."

He was joking, of course, but she appeared to take everything he said in earnest and became instantly alarmed.

"Oh, you mustn't do that!" she cried. "I could not bear to think you had injured yourself while you were obliging me."

Then she blushed like the inside of a pink shell at the interest she had thus unconsciously displayed in him.

He came nonchalantly to the rescue.

"Injure myself? Not likely. I was talking of injuring the *Argus* if the editor proved difficult to manage. I want you to understand, Miss Kemlin, that I am a valuable man, with no delusions regarding my own worth. It does the editor good to have this impressed upon him now and again, so, you see, I am glad of the opportunity. In what part of the town is your father's laboratory?"

He hesitated as he pronounced this word, thinking perhaps it sounded better than "workshop."

"We do not live in town at all, but at Woodruffe, a small place seventy-five miles to the north."

Spofford wrote down the name.

"And have you come all that distance to see me?" he asked.

"I am by way of being my father's assistant," she said, speaking quickly and blushing again. "I come to town now and then to buy materials—chemicals, metals, and all that. For some weeks I have resolved to meet you if it were possible. To tell you the truth, Mr. Spofford, I have lately been very, very anxious over the situation. My father employs ten or a dozen men, and did a very good business in electrical apparatus, the installing of electric light, and the practice of general electrical engineering. Since taking up the construction of this battery, however, he has neglected everything else, and I am more than alarmed at the outlook. I thought that if an article appeared in the *Argus*, he might perhaps get a capitalist to finance him, or he might be able to form a small company which would take the risk of future experiments, a risk which he cannot in justice to himself endure much longer."

"I see," replied Spofford solemnly. "And does your father know you came up to the office or intended to do so?"

The girl bent her gaze on the carpet at her feet, the rich colour again flushing her fair face. She replied in a low voice—

"I fear you will think me very bold in acting thus entirely on my own initiative; but my father is a dreamy, unpractical man who should have been a poet rather than an electrical engineer. He knows nothing of what I have done."

"Ah, well," Spofford hastened to say consolingly, "there is a great future in store for electricity, and I doubt if the same can be said about poetry in this country."

The girl now rose to her feet.

"I am so much obliged to you," she said, "for your courtesy in receiving me, and your patience in listening."

"The pleasure has been mine," replied Spofford, also rising. "I am very much interested in electricity—in science of any kind—and am constantly on the look-out for whatever is new. I might never have heard of this invention were it not for you, and the knowledge will strengthen my position here immensely."

"I am so glad of that," she said simply—"if you really mean it."

"Oh, I mean it most sincerely. It is the very life of the paper to be up-to-date, so I beg of you to say nothing of this invention until I learn what I can do with it. I may almost assure you the article will appear, but the lion in our path is the editor, as I have indicated. Now, I think the best plan would be for me to take a run out to Woodruffe as soon as I can, then I shall be able to investigate the battery on the spot."

"I should be very glad indeed if you would do so," she said, turning upon him those bewildering eyes of hers brimming with gratitude. "Trains are slow to Woodruffe, and I am sure your time is most valuable. I feel guilty at having taken up so much of it to-day."

"The obligation is all on my side, Miss Kemlin. I am busy, of course; but the information you have so kindly given me is right along the line of my activities, such as they are. It's all in the day's work, in fact; and, on behalf of the newspaper and myself, I must thank you for the trouble you have taken."

This enthusiastic farewell was so different from the somewhat freezing reception, that even so inexperienced a girl as Irene Kemlin could not but see that one touch of science makes the whole world kin. She thought it a fine thing that a young man like Jack Spofford should be so thoroughly wrapped up in his profession. From being afraid of him at first she had grown to like both him and his enthusiasm during their long interview. Now he accompanied her through

the hall and down the stair, bidding her a most cordial farewell at the door, while the eyes of Michael, the Irish porter, twinkled as he watched the two. The worthy Irishman saw that there was no censure coming to him from young Mr. Spofford. The porter put his head out of the box and said ingratiatingly to the special writer—

"The lady asked to see the proprietor or the editor or Mr. Spofford; and thinking she might be a friend of yours, I just allowed her to go upstairs."

"You were quite right, Michael," he replied, turning round from gazing after her. "She *is* a friend of mine, and any time she comes, I want to see her."

"Troth, I don't blame you," murmured the porter, as he withdrew into the box again.

Truth is mighty and will prevail, but nevertheless a great deal depends on the way it is presented. When the editor arrived, at five o'clock, Jack Spofford went in to see him. He opened the conversation with a fine air of indifference.

"That article on the Edison battery seems to have awakened more general interest than anything I have written this long time past."

"Has it?" asked the editor in his most noncommittal manner, for there flashed through his mind the thought that if this young fellow were seeking praise or a rise of salary, he was already extremely well paid, and was quite as conceited as was good for him. So the editor braced himself up to repel an attack from a quarter whence it was not to be delivered. This, of course, told in Spofford's favour, for it left unguarded the point at which the real assault was to be aimed.

"Yes, it has caused a good deal of comment, and it has had another effect, I am glad to say, which is to bring me into touch with all that is being done in that line, and I foresee some interesting developments."

"As, for instance——?" commented the editor.

"Well, this very day I learned that there is being constructed in a quiet country place within a hundred miles of this town a battery that will make the scientific world sit up when it is announced."

"Have you seen it?"

"No, and there may be some difficulty in getting to see it. I have not even seen the inventor of it, nor have I ever been into the village where he is working at it. The information came to me in a curious way, and I bound my informant to secrecy, so that I think we will have this exclusive if I can get full particulars."

"Well, Spofford, you're supposed to keep your eyes open. Are you certain that this man isn't a disguised company promoter or someone interested financially in the battery?"

Spofford looked down at the toes of his boots for a moment, as if hesitating to reply. Then he glanced up at his chief with a smile and said—

"I wouldn't confess it to everyone, but my informant was a lady, who knows as little about company promoting as she does of the mystery of radium, about which our conversation began."

"Oh, really," replied the editor, "this is most interesting. Well, how are you going to get at your particulars? Bribe the *employés?*"

"There are no *employés:* that is, there are none who are allowed to touch the cells. The inventor, I understand, is a somewhat unpractical man absorbed in science. I don't know whether he's a suspicious individual or not, because, as I say, I've never met him; but unless you have something better to suggest, I think of going to see him, and I don't intend to talk money at all. I shall pose as a devotee of science."

"Did you learn in what respect this battery differs from others?"

"Yes. It sounds incredible, but the lady said it could be charged in something like ten minutes. My first business would be to learn if this statement is true; personally I can't believe it."

"Very well," said the editor decisively; "investigate, and give it a column or a paragraph, according to its news value."

The young man concealed whatever joy he felt at being thus given a free hand, for, as he had remarked, editors are a suspicious class, and must be treated with the wisdom of the serpent as well as with the harmlessness of the dove.

Next morning found him on his way to the village of Woodruffe. He had taken the precaution to telegraph the hour of his arrival to Miss Kemlin, fearing that otherwise she might be absent from the village, and of course it would never do for an enthusiastic pupil to find his teacher away from home. One who essays the study of a serious subject must see to it that he has adequate instruction.

His forethought reaped its reward. Irene Kemlin herself met him at the station, which

'An absorbed man was bending over some calculations."

proved to be two miles distant from the village in which she lived.

"It is so good of you to take this long journey," said the girl, as she shook hands with him. "I had no idea I should see you here so soon."

"Promptness is a necessity in the newspaper business, Miss Kemlin," he replied. "The news from the Far East is very serious this morning; and if war breaks out, people will want to read of that, and so my scientific articles run a chance of being shelved."

"I have brought our best electric car with me," said she enthusiastically. "I thought perhaps you might be interested in a practical demonstration of the battery at work before you examined it in detail."

"Nothing could be better," he replied, as he took his seat beside her.

It was a very light car, built for two, like the bicycle in the song, and she handled it to perfection.

"And then, you see, I had a double purpose in view," she continued; "for it is all of two miles to our village, and I could not have you walk when you were so good as to take that long railway journey."

"Only two miles?" he echoed. "I wish it were twenty"; then, noticing the glance of surprise, perhaps at the warmth of his tone, he added hastily: "two miles, you know, are no test of the car's capacity. I should like to be able to say I took a much longer run in the vehicle."

"That is easily managed. Do you know this part of the country at all?"

"I never was here in my life before; but it seems a most charming locality, and I hope to become better acquainted with it."

"It is a beautiful district, and the roads are excellent. If you have the time, we will run to Longford and back, which is more than your twenty miles."

"Time?" he said recklessly. "I have all the time there is. I am still quite a young man, with an equal love for scenery and science."

She laughed lightly at this, pulled the lever a notch or two, and flew along with the speed and murmur of a humming-bird.

"Isn't this delightful?" she asked, turning her fascinating eyes upon him, while the curly tendrils of her fair hair fluttered about her rosy cheeks.

"I never had a more enjoyable experience in my life," he affirmed.

"Then you are fond of motoring?"

"Oh, as to that, I have often been in motor-cars, but I realise now that I have never motored before."

They went up the slight hills like a gull on the wing, and came down with the swoop of a hawk, slowing down only as they reached the villages.

"I am devoted to motoring," she said, as they faced a long strip of road which required less attention and rendered conversation possible. "I think there is no pleasure in the world to equal it."

The young man was watching her from the corners of his eyes, a slight smile on his lips which seemed to hint that there were other joys; but his lips forbore to give further expression to the thought of the moment, and the girl, who saw nothing but the road ahead, went on innocently with her talk.

"On a road like this I always think of Dickens's entrancing description of a coach ride. Do you remember it?"

"I'm afraid I don't," remarked Spofford; "my education has been neglected so far as Dickens is concerned."

"It is where he describes the grandeur of the coach, the splendour of the horses, the jingling of the harness, the mystery of the night, and then 'Yo-ho! Yo-ho!' the race with the moon. It is a very poem of rapid motion, and I often wonder what Dickens would have thought of a motor-car. I wish he were here now, to give us an adequate account of it."

"It's a blessing he's not," remarked Spofford glibly, "for then none of us younger writers would get a chance. Oh, I say!" he protested, as she slowed down and began turning the automobile round, "you are surely never going back already? I thought you were to take me to what's-its-name."

"Longford? We passed that five or six miles back."

"I never noticed it."

"I fear you have not been paying the strictest attention to the scenery that I expected."

"Indeed, Miss Kemlin, you wrong me!" cried the young man with unnecessary fervency. "My eyes have been filled with beauty ever since we left the station."

"Have they?" she commented shortly, then gave her whole attention to the backing and turning of the car.

"The ride does seem to have been incredibly brief," he complained.

"I was out with the car this morning," she explained, "before your telegram came, and had just time to go to the station and meet you. I am not sure how much power there is left, and am afraid of exhausting the batteries before we reach home."

But the batteries held out nobly, although she put on such speed that further conversation was impossible until the village of Woodruffe appeared among the trees before them, its tall church-spire overtopping the woods.

Woodruffe proved to be an ideal spot for scientific research, although the practical young man from the City doubted the possibility of building up any very lucrative electrical establishment in a place of such evidently limited demand. A pleasant rivulet of very clear water ran through the hamlet, and beside this stream stood the workshop of Mr. Kemlin, its end to the road cheek by jowl with the narrow stone bridge, which seemed designed long ago for the promotion of motor-car and bicycle accidents, which this shop stood conveniently ready to repair. A splashing water-wheel gave much more rapid motion than its own, by means of a big and little pulley joined by a belt, to a whirring dynamo, which furnished motive-power for lathes and what not as effectually as if the fall of the brook were Niagara itself. The residence stood some distance away, higher up on the brow of a hill, surrounded by a neat garden and backed by a miniature forest.

"By Jove! what a sylvan retreat!" cried young Spofford with admiration. "I declare I'd like to turn electrical engineer myself if I could reside here."

"I'm afraid father doesn't need any new apprentices," said the girl, with a laugh, as she drew up in front of the shop, after very deftly negotiating the rather steep hill.

"Ah! you wait till he and I get acquainted, and perhaps he may take me on in some capacity," said the young man, springing down and assisting her to alight.

The young woman appeared to think that this remark needed no response. At any rate, she made none, but led the way into the workshop, and down the central passage with whirring machinery and men at benches on either hand, until she came to a room the width of the building at the further end, where an absorbed man, who took no notice of their entrance, was bending over some calculations he was making on paper pinned to a drawing-board. He did not look up until his daughter touched his arm.

"Father," she said, "this is Mr. Spofford, the writer on scientific subjects for the

Daily Argus. He has come down to learn something about your battery."

"How are you?" said Mr. Kemlin absently. "Oh, the battery," he added, waking up a bit—"you mean for the purpose of writing about it?"

"That was my intention," replied the younger man.

"Ah, well, you see, Mr.—Mr.—Mr.——" the electrician looked helplessly at his daughter, and the young man, seeing she was anxiously embarrassed, came easily to the rescue of the situation.

"Spofford is my name, Mr. Kemlin. I see you are like myself, and cannot remember names."

"Ah, yes, Mr. Spofford." Then again he turned to his daughter and said with child-like simplicity: "It seems to me I remember that name. Wasn't it Spofford, my dear, who wrote that account of Edison's battery in the journal you showed me some time ago?"

"Yes, father."

"I recollect your name quite well, Mr. Spofford, although I don't read the papers very much. I haven't time. My reading is mostly scientific works. So far as my alkaline cell is concerned, it is not yet sufficiently advanced for anything to be said about it in public. I am still in the experimental stage, and it would be premature to make any announcement regarding it."

"Oh, father!" cried the girl in a murmur of disappointment, "after Mr. Spofford has so kindly come all this distance, surely you can tell him something about the battery?"

"I'm perfectly willing to tell him everything about it, my dear, but I fear at this point it would be merely deluding the public."

"I assure you, Mr. Kemlin," said the young man earnestly, "if the newspapers of to-day were to wait until a thing was finished before making proclamation of it, they might as well suspend publication. I had the pleasure of a run on your car this morning, and it seemed to me most efficient."

"True, true," agreed Kemlin; "but, you see, that was no test at all. Any battery would have taken the car over the same stretch of road, and some existing types would have carried it much further. I think, then, for the present, it is wiser to say nothing. How did you come to learn of my battery?"

"It is the business of a newspaper to find out everything that is going forward," replied the young man jauntily. He saw that the researcher had no suspicion of the part his daughter had played in the revelation, or had forgotten all about it if he had been told.

"I am sorry you came so far for no purpose," said Mr. Kemlin, his eye wandering over the design on the board. He had not the diplomacy to pretend an interest in this young man's visit, which he too evidently regarded as an annoying interruption. It was also clear that he was in the habit of expecting his daughter to aid him through any outside difficulties. He turned to her now.

"My dear, ever since lunch I have been working out these curves of efficiency, and am just at the point——"

"Father, you haven't had lunch yet," interrupted the girl.

"It was breakfast, then. Would you like to take Mr. Spofford out in the car and show him the country? They tell me it is very pretty, Mr. Spofford."

"We have just returned from a trip of twenty-five miles," said the girl, with a sigh. "I am going up to the house now, father, to see how lunch is getting on."

"That's right, my dear, that's right. Good-bye, Mr. Spofford; I am sorry your long journey results in nothing, but by and by something may come of it," and he shook hands with the young man so enthusiastically that Spofford would have laughed had it not been for the expression of deep distress on the girl's face.

"Father," she said, almost with severity, "you know there is no train till four o'clock, and Mr. Spofford is staying with us to lunch."

"Ah, yes, of course. I go to town so seldom that I forget about the trains. Then I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again, Mr. Spofford."

This was said with such an inflection of deep regret that the writer had to laugh in spite of himself.

"The railway seems determined that I shall remain in Woodruffe for some hours yet; besides, the battery in the motor-car is exhausted, so there is no escape by road."

"Oh, we could recharge it in ten minutes," cried the elder man, with a gleam of hope.

"It's no use, Mr. Kemlin; my own battery is exhausted, and you can't recharge that in ten minutes, unless you've got a quick-lunch establishment in Woodruffe, which I doubt. My rapid tour through this district has given

me a substantial hunger which must be appeased, so I warn you that I'm going to accept your daughter's kind invitation."

The girl was at the door by this time, not looking backwards; and as the young man hastened to open it, he saw that her father, with bent shoulders, was already oblivious of them, absorbed in his curves of efficiency. His daughter walked straight through the humming workshop without a word, almost on the verge of tears. Once outside, into the quiet again, she forced herself to speak.

"I am afraid, Mr. Spofford, you will think us most inhospitable, but——"

"Dear Miss Kemlin, permit me the rudeness of interrupting you. You cannot imagine how delighted I am at Mr. Kemlin's reception of me. Nothing could have been more excellent. If I had had a week to think over the situation, and had stage-managed it myself, I could not have arranged it half so well."

"I am sure I don't understand you."

"You will understand me in a moment. Your idea, and mine, is to see an account of this battery in the *Argus*. As I told you yesterday, I am far from being all-powerful on the paper. Supreme power is the editor's sphere of usefulness, and I know that when I return there will be something new on the carpet, which will have a tendency to place the battery in the background. Very often articles get as far as type, yet never see the light, being crowded out by something newer or something that is regarded as more important. Now, when I return and give the editor an absolutely truthful account of my reception by Mr. Kemlin, there will be just one thing in the world which that editor desires, and that one thing is an account of the Kemlin battery. The very fact that your father almost turned me off the premises, and that I persisted in spite of him, makes the appearance of my article inevitable."

They had walked up the hill together, and now paused at the gate of the house.

"You will come in?" she inquired.

"Not just yet, Miss Kemlin. If you will tell me the hour I am to be here, you may depend upon my promptness. I wish to take a stroll through the village, see the old church, and get a nearer view of that charming water-wheel."

He held the gate open for her, but she still stood irresolutely, then spoke slowly and with hesitation, a touching expression, almost of appeal, in her troubled eyes.

"I have no adviser. I have neither mother, brother, nor sister. I fear it was an unmaidenly act for me to call boldly on you as I did yesterday."

"Indeed it was nothing of the sort," said Spofford stoutly.

"I can't explain understandingly just what caused me to do it. I was thinking only of my father; and to me, somehow, a great newspaper was an impersonal thing, and I did not expect—it seemed to me—I did not know—I'm afraid I cannot explain just why the situation seems changed."

"Oh, I can explain it, Miss Kemlin. You did not expect to meet a friend, and I assure you, you met a very true friend, if you will allow me to say as much."

"I was thinking of my father," she continued, with some semblance of the dreaminess of the man she had mentioned. "He truly follows the Biblical injunction, and takes no thought for the morrow, and I—I fear the future. Now that you have met my father, you will understand why it was of no use to consult with him. He knows nothing of what I have done, and would not remember it for an hour if I told him; and now I seem to have got you here under false pretences, as it were."

"Miss Kemlin," said the young man, with great seriousness, "the adviser is here, such as he is, if you will let him advise. Have no anxiety about the future, for the future must be good, or I shall be a very disappointed man."

"Thank you for your encouragement," she said, with a smile that seemed to chase away in part the melancholy that had surrounded her. "And now let the adviser be here at half past one. Meanwhile, I must look to the immediate future," and with that she left him to investigate the resources of the village.

On his return to the house, he encountered Mr. Kemlin, slowly toiling up the hill, and found it was necessary to reintroduce himself. An ancient housekeeper presided at lunch, and her volubility more than compensated for Mr. Kemlin's silence. She was greatly fluttered at the advent of a visitor from town, and explained to him over and over again that she had had no warning of his coming. It seemed that nothing more practical was to be expected from either Mr. Kemlin or his daughter; but next time he visited Woodruffe, the housekeeper assured him, he should have a meal more in accordance with pampered City appetites. Jack Spofford affirmed that he had never before encountered so excellent a repast—which, indeed, might have been true

enough, for the young man was exceedingly hungry.

One result of this second meeting with Mr. Kemlin was that he reluctantly gave his consent to the writing of the proposed article on his cell, and so, equipped with plans and full particulars, the energetic young fellow wrote his account on his way to town, and had it finished and corrected before he reached the terminus.

However, his promptness did not meet the reward it deserved, because cannons began to fire in the East, and it was nearly three weeks before the article appeared; but during those three weeks he managed to make another journey to Woodruffe, taking the proof of the article with him, because, of course, one desires to be extremely accurate as well as readable in these things. The proof, of course, might have been sent by post, but a personal interview with scientific authority is always preferable. Not that he neglected the mails, either, for many communications passed between himself and the young lady, and sometimes they took the form of interesting books which were not invariably treatises on electricity.

When at last the article appeared, he sent down a bundle of copies containing it, and later a bunch of clippings from an agency showing how extracts had been made from it all over the country. After this bunch of extracts had gone, there was a lull, with no particular reason for further correspondence, unless the young man had ingenuity enough to find a suitable excuse. This did not take him long, for, as has been indicated, he was an ingenious person. After a suitable beginning, he had the audacity to write as follows—

"The other night, being lucky enough to see the moon over my right shoulder, I remembered your allusion to Dickens's account of the coach ride. I have succeeded in finding the extract you referred to. Sinking for the moment the jealousy of one writing-man against another, I will admit that it is first-rate. Nevertheless, I should like to have a chance of rivalling it. Most people would call this check, but I call it ambition. If I went to Woodruffe on the evening train when the moon gets a little brighter, do you think it would be possible for me to enjoy a moonlight ride on that swift little car that brought me from the station?"

He waited impatiently for a reply to this, and it came much sooner than he anticipated. It was a bulky envelope that reached him, and on tearing it open he found it contained several documents besides the letter which Miss Kemlin had written. The girl apparently had failed to estimate the exact intentions of his communication.

"DEAR MR. SPOFFORD," she wrote—

"It will be quite possible for you to enjoy the moonlight ride you speak of if you can spare a day or two down here learning to run the car. Indeed, your suggestion seems almost providential, for I have recently been in considerable trouble, not knowing quite what to do. The enclosed documents are copies of a contract which my father has entered into with a man named Blake, who has been here several times from town on his own high-powered petrol automobile, which he finds faster than the train. I think my father should not have signed these papers without consulting me; but as it is done, I suppose there is no help for it. The battery, as at present constructed, certainly will not carry the car from Woodruffe to town without recharging. Father is so anxious for money to carry on his experiments that he would sign anything which seemed to promise such an outcome. He tells me he is certain that some improvements he has made will give longer life to the battery; but he has thought that before. If you read the contract, you will see that in event of failure, all rights in this battery practically pass into the hands of Blake. Of course, if the car succeeds in making the journey, Blake is to pay father the sum stated every month until his experiments are finished. Father endeavoured to calm my fears by saying that Blake had assured him he would pay this amount in any case, and also make proper compensation to him when he formed the manufacturing company; but the contract doesn't say this, and I fear verbal arrangements may not be kept. The trial is to take place at night, so as to avoid the traffic near town, and it is to be on the night of the full moon, or the first good night after, as the weather at this time of the year is rather uncertain. Father is either to drive the car himself or to furnish a driver who will look after his interests. Blake puts on some man from town. Now, as father is too absent-minded to be trusted on a car even in daylight, he would wreck himself and anyone else who was with him before he had gone five hundred yards. I thought, after receiving your letter, that as you are anxious for a moonlight experience on a motor-car, you might learn to drive,

and could represent father on that occasion. But I am certain that the battery will never accomplish the task set to it. Please tell me what you think of these contracts."

The letter which Irene Kemlin received in answer to this was cheering and comforting, as the advertisements say. It is always a brightening episode to get an epistle from an optimistic man. Here is part of it.

"Don't worry. I know old Blake, who is a company promoter and a scoundrel. Perhaps I'm using terms unnecessarily synonymous. The contracts I shall take to a legal friend, and hear what he thinks of them. If I did not know Blake, I should say on reading them that they could be nullified for contravening the Gambling Act. What they record is practically a bet; but, on the other hand, Blake employs the best legal advice, which has kept him out of prison up to date, so the documents will probably stand. But if the worst comes to the worst, I can frighten him off. Luckily he is as timid as a rabbit, and there is nothing he is so much afraid of as a newspaper. Newspaper terrorism is always used in the interests of the dear public, of course, and while it is going on, proprietors are liable to get nervous about libel suits. Blake's Ethereal Telephone swindle has not been forgotten yet, and I may have occasion to remind him of the fact. However, that's only as a last resource. I have a plan that charms me. In the old days the saying was: 'Fight the devil with fire,' but the modern rendition is: fight him with electricity. I'll let you know all about it when I reach Woodruffe; meanwhile, if Blake visits you again, give no hint that you are acquainted with me. It is not worth while to warn your father, as I am sure he has forgotten me entirely."

After this letter was despatched, young Spofford called at the sumptuous offices of Blake and Co. and insisted on seeing the great man himself. After waiting in another room for longer than he liked, he was admitted to the presence.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Blake. Perhaps you don't remember me. I'm Spofford, of the *Argus*."

"I remember you very well," said the financier with great urbanity. "What can I do for you?"

"You read my article on the Kemlin motor, of course? A motor and a promoter go together, you know."

Mr. Blake was good enough to laugh at this, and the laughter gave him time to consider his reply.

"I think I saw it," he said with a non-committal air. "Why?"

"The *Argus* learns that you are likely to be interested in it, and I've come to get particulars. I shan't make any use of them until you are quite ready to see them in print."

"There are no particulars to give at the present moment. I admit I am investigating: and if the tests prove satisfactory, I may have something to communicate to you later on."

Jack Spofford rose with a weary look on his face and heaved a deep sigh.

"Good-bye," he said; and then, as if on second thoughts: "I should think, Mr. Blake, you have had enough experience with journalists to know better than to give them extra trouble."

"I don't in the least understand what you mean," said Blake in apparent perplexity.

"Pardon me, but you do. You refuse to give me information. Very well; you are quite within your rights. What happens? I am determined to get that information. I'll take that beastly journey down to Woodruffe, where I went in the first place to see the battery. Before forty-eight hours, or half that time, or quarter that time, I'm in possession of all I want to know. I'm not indebted to you for it, therefore I spread it broadcast to the world, possibly at the most inopportune moment so far as you are concerned. On the other hand, you make your statement to me here. I am then indebted to you and saved a lot of bother. You have my word of honour that I shall publish nothing until you are ready for it, and you are very well aware that I shall not break my word once I give it."

"Sit down, Mr. Spofford, sit down," said the financier soothingly. "There is not the least need in getting excited about this affair, for there is really nothing in it. If you tell me what the *Argus* already knows, I shall be glad either to corroborate or deny; and if you give me your word that you will publish nothing, nor use my name in connection with it, I shall be delighted to place all the facts at your disposal. Now, in the first place, what is your version of it?"

"I have no version in particular. I hear there's to be a motor-race from Woodruffe to this office."

"There is to be no race," said Blake suavely. "There is simply to be a private test of endurance. There will be but one

"They had walked up the hill together, and now paused at the gate of the house."

car, and two persons riding in it, with no control, no stop-watches, no timing, but merely a trial to determine the life of the cell. They may reach here in three hours, or they may take all night to do it."

"Night?" cried Spofford in surprise. "Why night? Why not make the test in daylight."

"Oh, for several reasons. In the first place, there will be moonlight; in the second

place, there will be less traffic on the road; in the third place, we want to do this as quietly as possible."

"Which means you don't want to have a newspaper article written on it just now?"

"Frankly, I do not."

"I hope you see now, Mr. Blake, the wisdom of complete frankness. I'd have found all this out within the next day or two, and our men would be stationed along the road when you made your trial. As it is, I pledge you my word that no hint of this shall be given in print until you are ready."

"I'm sure I am very much obliged to you," returned Blake.

Spofford's eyes were fixed ruminatively upon the ceiling.

"That would make a fine story," he murmured. "'The Midnight Ride.' 'Scenes on the Road.' 'Secret Test of the Kemlin Battery,' of which the *Argus* gave the first hint to the public. The right man could make a thrilling article of that, Mr. Blake."

"I have your word, Mr. Spofford."

"Certainly, certainly. But the beauty of this article is that time is not the essence of the contract; which, being translated, means that the contribution would be just as good in the *Argus* a year from now as to-day. Here is what I propose. I'll write that midnight trip as well as I can, and I'll leave my copy with you until you give the word to publish. You have the right to place a man on board the car, I suppose, or do you furnish the two men?"

"Mr. Kemlin supplies the driver, and an appointee of my own sits beside him."

"Oh, that's first-rate. I wish you'd appoint me as your representative, or, if there is room for a third on the car, let me be the extra man."

"No, there is room for but two. I have no objection to your going if you promise me to see that Kemlin's driver doesn't put in another set of batteries on the way, or recharge the batteries already there."

"Oh, I promise that. I'll make a note of everything that Kemlin's driver does, tell you whether the car breaks down or not, and how much time is consumed in making repairs. I shall have to take notes of all these things, anyhow, and you may as well have the use of them as not. When does this trial take place?"

"On the night of the fifteenth, unless the weather is so bad that you do not care to set out. If it is, then on the first fair night afterwards."

"Right you are. Now, if you will just give me a little note to Mr. Kemlin, constituting me your representative, I shall not trouble you further till after the test."

"Don't you know Mr. Kemlin?"

"I met him, of course, when I learnt the particulars of his invention; but he seemed to be an absent-minded sort of man, and I'm sure he wouldn't recognise me again."

Mr. Blake touched an electric button. A stenographer came in, and he dictated a short note, which, when it was typed, he signed and handed over to the journalist, who thanked him, rose, and took his departure.

Next day, in a quiet village, a little less than half way between town and Woodruffe, Jack Spofford concluded two agreements—one on a financial basis, the other on a basis of friendship. The monetary adjustment consisted of making terms with a temperance tavern that someone should sit up on the night of the fifteenth and keep a kettle boiling, so that a lady arriving any time between twelve and three might have a cup of tea or coffee, with a biscuit or two. The friendly contract was made with the manager of the model printing-works on a back street which employed most of the young people in the village. This establishment, which possessed the latest kind of gas engines, animated by producer gas made on the premises, thus running the newest kind of dynamo, and supplying power to the most modern printing-presses, had on its completion been glorified in an article by Jack Spofford, and the young man feared no refusal in that quarter.

The conspiracy being complete, Jack journeyed on to Woodruffe, and it may as well be admitted first as last that Irene Kemlin was exceedingly glad to see him. He had telegraphed as usual, for, being accustomed to City pavements, he had small affection for that two-mile walk, preferring to do it in an electric car, as no cabs were to be had at Woodruffe station.

"Have you come to take lessons in driving?" she asked, as they set off along the road.

"No, madam, I have not. It may surprise you to be told that I ride on the car to town as Mr. Blake's representative. The contract binds your father to supply a driver."

"He cannot do that!" she cried in dismay, "unless he gets someone from the City; and I should be afraid to trust a stranger, for even if he were honest, he would not understand thoroughly in so short a time the mechanism of the car."

"My dear Miss Kemlin, your father can provide the most expert of drivers merely by saying the word."

"Who, for instance?"

"Yourself, for instance."

"Me? Oh, that is out of the question. Do you think I'm going to drive a car to town through the night, arriving there—oh, it's absurd! it is impossible!"

"Miss Kemlin, you have not considered the question in all its bearings. You will admit you know everything about the car and the batteries. Very well; no one has that knowledge except your father, and he is not to be thought of, as you would be the first to admit. But the point you overlook is this — I shall be there to take care of you."

"That is true," she mused, with a simplicity that made his heart jump with glee.

"We shall have before us the best of roads, and, I hope, a clear, moonlit night. What more could be desired? We'll do the whole journey in four or five hours easily."

The girl shook her head despondently.

"We shall not get within twenty-five miles of town. There will be scarce an atom of energy left when we have completed fifty miles."

"I don't agree with you; but we won't argue that point. If the worst comes to the worst, we are never far from the railway line, and you can easily return home on the train that leaves the terminus at six o'clock in the morning. I've worked it all out. That is the train you are going to take, in any case. We shall reach town about five o'clock, and after reporting at Blake's office — they are to be waiting for us there from half-past three—we will go to the terminus, stow our car in the garage opposite, have an early morning breakfast at the station, and I'll escort you back to Woodruffe. Now, you see, Miss Kemlin, it all depends on you. I have everything planned out, even to the garage opposite the station, and you alone can thwart my project."

"It is very, very kind of you to take all this trouble," she mused, as if speaking to herself.

"If there were anyone else who would do as well," continued the young man, with a ring of honesty in his voice which sounded much more genuine than it actually was, "I shouldn't think of asking this favour from you, because I quite understand that the night may be chilly, or this eternal rain we've been having may come on again."

"Oh, that doesn't matter; that doesn't matter in the least," exclaimed the girl. "I don't mind the weather at all, and I wonder at myself for hesitating so long that I have given you such an impression. Certainly I shall go, although I fear it is to defeat."

"We'll chance that," cried the jubilant young man.

Everything went well up to the very night of the test, and almost to the moment of starting from Woodruffe.

The little car stood on the summit of the bridge, with Irene Kemlin on one side of it preparing to mount, her veil now drawn down; Jack Spofford on the other; and the foreman taking his last peering round of the little vehicle—when Jack fancied he heard in the still night air the hum as of a gigantic bee away to the south.

"What's that?" he cried in alarm; but before anyone could answer him, there appeared on the brow of the hill the blinding disc of an acetylene lamp; then, as if taking a dive into space, down there plunged to the front of the shop the forty-horse-power automobile belonging to Jackson Blake, drawing up with a convulsive shudder almost at their very feet. Fortunately the exclamation which Jack uttered, and which is quite unfit for print, was drowned by the muffled roar of the machine, which panted and quivered there, though it had come to a standstill. The party in the big automobile consisted of a *mécanicien*, wearing a long, black, rubber coat, and horrifying goggles that gave him the appearance of some monster escaped from a pantomime, while in the rear seats were two young men in fur overcoats like brown bears. Mr. Blake himself was not there; indeed, it could hardly have been expected that an elderly gentleman of his wealth should care for an automobile tour at this time of night. The *mécanicien* was sombre and taciturn, but the two young men were exceedingly jolly, and Spofford surmised that, late as was the hour, stimulants had not been lacking on the way thither. All three got out, the driver opening the tool-chest, taking therefrom a wrench, and tightening a bolt here and there. One of the young men approached the foreman and said: "You are Mr. Kemlin, I think?"

"No, sir, Mr. Kemlin is not here; I am his foreman."

"Ah, just so. This is the little machine, is it?" and he walked jauntily round the electric car. "Well, do you think you're going to make town in that perambulator before morning?"

"We're going to have a try, sir," said the foreman grimly.

"Just so, just so," genially responded the bear—"nothing like having a try, is there? If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Just so. Well, my friend, we'll stand by and tow you into port when your power gives out."

"Am I to understand," said Jack Spofford, with sinking heart, as he stepped forward, "that you represent Mr. Blake?"

"Just so," said the bear, with a laugh. "You are Mr. Spofford, I suppose?"

"Yes, I am; and furthermore, I am the authorised representative of Mr. Blake. He said nothing of any others to me."

"Oh, that's all right," returned the bear, with a jaunty wave of his paw; "he told us about you, so honours are even."

"That's all very well," protested Jack hotly; "but Mr. Blake cannot change the conditions of this contest at the last moment without the concurrence of Mr. Kemlin."

"I understood you were to represent Mr. Blake on the electric car," said the bear.

"So I am."

"Just so. Well, it seems to me that if any protest is to arise against our presence, it should come from the other side. In other words, I don't think Mr. Blake's action should be criticised by his own man."

Jack Spofford was quick to see he had made a mistake in tactics. He realised in an instant that he had underestimated Blake's shrewdness, and he wondered why it had not occurred to him before that the financier might not have been convinced by the reason tendered him for Spofford's desire to take part in the contest. In any case, it was poor diplomacy to bring himself into opposition with those who were supposed to be on his own side.

"You quite misunderstand me," said Jack Spofford. "If you are here on behalf of Mr. Blake, there is nothing more to be said; but I want to see your credentials, being prepared to show my own."

"Just so. We don't dispute your credentials, and don't intend to produce any of our own. You must remember that, according to law, the road is as free for us as for you. We're here to follow your car until it reaches Mr. Blake's office."

"That's all right," cried Jack, with an outburst of candour; "your reasons are unanswerable. I did not recognise Mr. Blake's car; in fact, I never saw it before, but the foreman here tells me he knows the car. I am merely looking after the interests of my principal, and naturally, when a pair of strangers came up at the last moment, I thought it my duty to Mr. Blake to make inquiry."

"Just so, just so, just so," repeated the bear. "Come and have a drink with us, and then you'll feel better."

"Thank you, I don't drink so early in the morning, and am anxious to be off. Foreman, is this car ready for the road?"

Spofford walked round to the other side of the car, pretending to examine it.

"Foreman," whispered Jack, as they bent their heads together on the further side of the electric car, "here's a chance to earn more money than you ever made in a night before. For Heaven's sake unscrew some nut or other that will make the automobile of those chaps break down!"

"I don't need any money for that," murmured the foreman in return. "I saw how the land lay; and while you were talking, I shoved a nail through the back tyre. It will shake out before they've gone a mile, and after that—well, I expect them back here—it will take some time to mend. Where do you want them to catch up to you, sir?"

"Oh, about twenty miles from town, or thereabouts."

"Right you are."

Jack Spofford silently shook hands with the foreman under cover of the car; and this shows that when a man goes wrong, he is apt to lead others astray as well.

"I think we're all ready, Miss Kemlin," said Spofford, whereupon Irene sprang up to her seat, grasping steering-rod and switch-handle, Jack taking his place by her side.

"Oho!" cried the vulgar bear, laughing outright, "that's the arrangement, is it? My son, I apologise. I was young myself once."

Spofford said nothing, and closed his lips tightly so that he could continue saying nothing. The two young men in furs seemed to consider the situation exceedingly comical.

"Turn the auto' round, John; we must keep an eye on those two."

Miss Kemlin stared straight ahead of her, pulled the starting-lever one notch towards her, and the little car darted down the incline formed by the bridge, then climbed the opposing hill at half speed until they reached the top.

"Now," said Jack, "full speed ahead, and let us get clear of those brutes."

She made no reply further than the practical one of pulling the lever notch by notch towards her, each notch producing a thrilling little emphasis, which was maintained until

"'You will come back and have tea with me?' she asked."

the car swung forward to the extent of its power. Behind them they heard the throb of the powerful giant that followed.

In a few minutes it was right on their heels, with the acetylene lamp contending with the moonlight on the road. Then the giant swung aside and passed them almost as if they were standing still, while the hilarious young men made the air vibrate with their ringing cheers.

"We'll wait for you further on!" one of them shouted.

"Yes, I know you will," Jack muttered under his breath.

Although the night seemed as bright as day, yet it was not so, for the leviathan disappeared in the haze almost before they realised it had passed them.

After travelling rapidly for a mile or two, the girl leaned forward, pushing the lever from her and slowing the machine.

"What's that ahead?" she cried.

"I suspect it's our friends of the fur coats."

The electric car stole silently up to them, the big automobile stood square in the middle of the road, and all three had dismounted, seemingly holding a consultation together.

"What's wrong?" cried Spofford, trying to keep the glee from his voice and throw a trace of anxiety into his inquiry.

"Oh," cried one of the bears, much subdued, "we seem to have picked up a nail, worse luck!"

"I think there is room to pass," whispered Spofford to his comrade, and she moved the car slowly alongside and by.

"Well, we'll wait for you further on!" cried Spofford, flinging their own remark to them over his shoulder. There was no reply.

They sped on through the night in silence, Irene too intent on watching the road to say anything; Jack too intent listening in deep apprehension for the throb of an engine on the road behind, and too anxious about the safe accomplishment of the scheme he had laid out. They ran through sleeping village after sleeping village.

"I hope," said Irene, "we won't pick up a nail."

"We won't pick up *that* nail," replied Jack, with a laugh. "I suppose it is selfish of me, but I'm glad they were in front of us."

At last they came to the village which held the printing-office.

"Now, Miss Kemlin, you will get down here. You have done nobly. Please come to a stand at the next corner."

"Why?" she asked.

"Because I have arranged with the people to sit up and have a hot cup of tea and a biscuit ready for you."

"I really don't need it, Mr. Spofford, and I'm so anxious about the batteries. I fear they will not last much longer."

"We won't cross a bridge till we come to it, Miss Kemlin. Here's our spot, and there's 'a light in the window for thee,' I see."

"It is very kind of you," she murmured, "and I think I should enjoy a cup of tea, after all."

"Of course you will. Now I am going to take this machine down the street a bit, and conceal it, in the hope that those fellows will pass us meanwhile."

He sprang down and assisted her to alight: and, indeed, she needed his help, for now that the strain was relaxed she seemed rather numb, so that she almost fell into his outstretched arms. He knocked at the door, which was at once opened, although the woman waiting for them was rather sleepy as she bade them welcome. A good fire was glowing on the open hearth, and an iron kettle singing merrily. Irene Kemlin took off her gloves and held out her hands to the warmth.

"You will come back and have tea with me?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, I'll return in a few moments."

He drove the car round the corner, and down the side street until he came to the engine-house of the printing-works, which looked ominously dark and silent.

"Hallo, Henry!" he shouted, and was much relieved when the broad door hanging on rollers was shoved back, showing the lighted interior with the big engine and dynamo.

"Well, John, you're here at last. I thought you never were coming."

"Are you ready for me?"

"Ready and waiting this two hours. Just run the car right inside, so that I can close the door. If you are doing something surreptitious, as I suspect, let us not throw any unnecessary light on the roadway."

Spofford ran the car inside, and the other drew the door shut again. The electrician tested the battery.

"Not much power left there," he said: then there was silence until he had attached the wires and started the gas engine.

"Now, Henry, you pump it in for ten minutes. I'm going down to the corner to have a cup of tea, having made arrangements to that effect."

"Then I am not the only person to sit up all night? Now, let me tell you, my lad, that ten minutes' pumping, as you call it, isn't going to do much good to a storage battery."

"Have faith, Henry, have faith. It'll do some good to that one. You keep your engine going until I store some tea, then I'll discuss electricity with you if you like," and with that the young man disappeared into the moonlight.

On returning to the temperance inn, he found a little table set before the fire, covered with a white cloth and a most tempting array of eatables. Irene had waited for him, and

now poured out the tea. Not until this moment had he realised how cold it was outside. Irene looked dreamily drowsy, her fine eyes heavy with sleep, as if she were a very small girl who had been kept up too late. Jack was wide awake, and talked breezily, with many flashes of wit, to which his companion made no reply, merely smiling at the way he was running on. He thought she had never looked so entrancing as now, and wished that these were the old days, and they were on the way towards Gretna Green.

"Good Heavens!" he cried suddenly, looking at his watch, "the ten minutes are passed!"

"What ten minutes?" she asked.

"Oh!" he stammered, "we must be off! Mentally I allowed ourselves just ten minutes over this tea. I must go at once for the car."

"I suppose you must," she said with a sigh of reluctance.

Without another word he was away, pausing for a moment outside the door to listen for the hum of the big motor; but the night was intensely still. He sped round the corner to the engine-house on the run, praying his luck might hold for a few minutes longer. The big engine was motionless, and Henry had turned round the motor-car facing the door.

"I have given it twelve minutes," he said, "and have tested the battery. Actually it seems to be fully charged."

"Of course it is. When you want to learn the latest news regarding electricity, call on your humble servant at the *Argus* office."

"Are you going to town right away?"

"Yes."

"Well, as my night's rest is a thing of the past, I don't mind going with you."

"Henry, take warning. Motoring is a dangerous occupation, especially at night, and more especially on a moonlit night. Take my advice and the early morning train."

"Well, that's gratitude! Here have I sat up all night——"

"Yes, and made me for ever your debtor. Truth to tell, Henry, I have a passenger waiting for me down in the tea-garden."

"Oho! then it's a case of two's company?"

"Exactly."

"An elopement?"

"No; I wish it was."

"All right, my lad; I'll take your advice and the morning train. Good luck to you!"

As Jack halted in front of the temperance tavern, he listened again; but all was still, as if no such thing as a forty-horse-power automobile existed in this slumbering world. Miss Kemlin was standing in the road waiting for him.

"That poor woman was just stupid with sleep," she said, "so I came outside."

Jack, glancing at the house, saw it was already dark.

"Are you going to drive?" she asked.

"Yes, if you will allow me. I shall go at half speed and steer very carefully. You hap yourself up, lean back, and be happy."

"Is that a pun?" she asked, taking the hand he offered her and climbing up.

"No, it is very sober earnest. I shouldn't think of punning with such serious business ahead of me."

"Perhaps you had better let me drive, after all."

"No; the section in the immediate future must be accomplished by myself alone."

"I'll assist if you get into any difficulties."

"Please remember that promise. I hold you to it."

They were now trundling along the highway at half speed. The moon was already getting well down towards the west.

"We are not going very fast," he said; "yet now begins our actual race with the moon to the tune of 'Yo ho! Yo ho!'"

"I thought it began at midnight."

"No, this is the real race."

"I think you drive very well," she encouraged him.

"Thank you. I hope I shall not wreck myself."

"Us, you mean."

"No, myself."

His foot accidentally touched the knob that rang the bell, and the unexpected sound in the quiet of the night made him jump, while the car swerved rather startlingly. He brought it up on its course again, while the girl laughed.

"I think," she said, "if you are going to talk, you had better let me drive."

"I declare I'm quite nervous. Still, I persist in driving and talking too. I wanted to ask you, Miss Kemlin, if you think me a selfish man?"

"What a ridiculous question! Of course you are not."

"It grieves me to state that I am. This journey was taken by me for a reason that you have not guessed. I am more selfish than old Blake. He wants your father's battery, I want your father's daughter."

Now she leaned back in her seat, as he

had just before recommended her to do; and glancing sideways at her, to the imminent danger of the car, he saw that her eyes were closed.

The young man recklessly pulled the switch-lever as far towards him as it would go, and from then onwards was compelled to attend strictly to the steering of the car. The girl said nothing, nor did she make any effort to interfere with his management of the machine, although his guidance was somewhat awe-inspiring, rather trying to the nerves if his passenger had been timid. The silent miles glided swiftly to the rear; lower and lower sank the moon, and now, becoming more confident as he turned his glance momentarily from the road, and rewarded himself with a look at her face, he saw a new and delicate light upon it, which had been in shadow before, because she sat to the westward of him, between himself and the moon.

"There is another race with the moon," he said. "The victorious dawn is breaking."

"Yes," she replied simply, "and I see signs of the City ahead of us."

"That means victory for us, Irene."

"I think it does," she replied very softly, and silence fell once more between them, to be broken at last by an exclamation of impatience from the young man.

"There is that confounded automobile catching up to us again. I wish it would select another nail on the road."

"So do I," answered the girl, at which they both laughed.

"You haven't answered my question," he said hastily.

"You haven't asked me any."

"Haven't I? I thought I did, and a very important one to me."

"No, you made a statement of preference which was very important to me," echoed the girl in a voice not much above a whisper.

"Hallo, young people! you've got this far, have you?" roared the unwelcome bear, as the giant automobile came alongside on the road, which was now of ample width.

"Yes," said Spofford, "we have made some progress since we saw you last."

One of the bears was curled up, evidently sound asleep, in the tonneau; the other did not seem to be too thoroughly awake, and his voice was scarcely within his control.

"It's a case of 'We won't go home till morning!' isn't it?" he cried genially. "Lemme offer you—offer you something to drink."

"No, thank you."

"Do you good," said the bear.

"Thank you very much, but I never begin drinking before six a.m., and stop promptly at eleven p.m. Between eleven p.m. and six a.m. I touch nothing intoxicating."

"Good boy," approved the bear—"nothing like a regulated life. I love a temperate man, though I don't practise much at it myself. Electricity still holding out? That's astonishing!"

"Oh, no, it isn't astonishing at all. You see, instead of drinking the stimulant you so generously offered, I poured a bottle or two into the cells. That accounts for it."

"Just so, just so; splendid idea! Wonder no one ever thought of that before. Well, I'm sleepy; and if you'll excuse me, we'll go on."

"Do," cried Spofford heartily. "I'll tell old Blake you accomplished your mission to everyone's satisfaction."

"Thanks, dear boy, thanks. We'll wait for you in town, sign papers, or anything else you want. Remarkable little car that of yours," and the big automobile, with a spurt, plunged on ahead and left them alone once more.

"It *is* a remarkable car," murmured Jack contentedly. "A golden chariot, carrying us from Woodruffe to Paradise. Isn't that true, Irene?"

"I think so," she sighed, placing her hand in his.

A CRY.

LEAN from your Heaven, Belovèd!
If Heaven be not so sweet, that you forget
The dear dead past that I remember yet.
Lean from your Heaven, Belovèd!

Speak from your Heaven, Belovèd!
Let your dear voice speak once, that I may know
You love me, as you loved me long ago.
Speak from your Heaven, Belovèd!

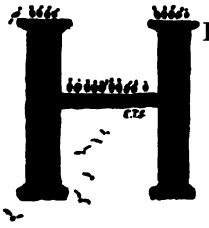
In your blest Heaven, Belovèd,
Think of me still, that by your thoughts of me
You make us one for all Eternity,
In your blest Heaven, Belovèd!

L. G. MOBERLY.

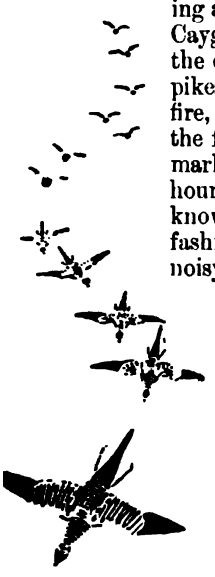
THE BOY AND THE LYNX.

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

The Boy.



HE was barely fifteen, a lover of sport, and uncommonly keen, even for a beginner. Flocks of wild pigeons had been coming all day across the blue Lake of Caygeonull, and in long lines on the dead limbs of the great rampikes that stood as monuments of fire, around the little clearing in the forest, they afforded tempting marks, but he followed them for hours in vain. They seemed to know the exact range of the old-fashioned shot-gun, and rose on noisy wings each time before he was near enough to fire. At length a small flock scattered among the low, green trees that grew about the spring, near the log shanty, and taking advantage of the cover, Thorburn went in gently. He caught sight of a single pigeon close to him, took a long aim, and fired. A sharp crack resounded at almost the same time, and the bird fell dead. Thorburn rushed to seize the prize just as a tall young man stepped into view and picked it up.



"Hello, Corney! you got my bird!"

"Your burrud! Sure yours flew away thayre. I saw them settle hayer, and thought I'd make sure of wan with the rifle."

A careful examination showed that a rifle-ball, as well as a charge of shot, had struck the pigeon. The gunners had fired on the same bird. Both enjoyed the joke, though it had its serious side, for food as well as ammunition was scarce in that backwoods home.

Corney, a superb specimen of a six-foot Irish-Canadian in early manhood, now led the way to the log shanty, where the very scarcity of luxuries and the roughness of their lives was a source of merriment. For the colts, though born and bred in the backwoods of Canada, had lost nothing of the spirit that makes the Irish blood a world-wide synonym of heartiness and wit.

Corney was the eldest son of a large family. The old folks lived at Petersay, twenty-five miles to the southward. He had taken up a "claim" to carve his own home out of the woods at Fenebonk, and his grown sisters—Margat, staid and reliable, and Loo, bright and witty—were keeping house for him. Thorburn Alder was visiting them. He had just recovered from a severe illness, and had been sent to rough it in the woods, in hope of winning some of the vigour of his hosts. Their home was of unhewn logs, unfloored, and roofed with sods which bore a luxuriant crop of grass and weeds. The primitive woods around were broken in two places—one where the sparkling lake rolled on a pebbly shore and gave a glimpse of Ellerton's, across the water four miles, their nearest neighbour; and the other where the roughest of roads led southward to Petersay.

Their daily round had little change. Corney was up at daybreak to light the fire, call his sisters, and feed the horses while they prepared breakfast. At six the meal was over, and Corney went to his work. At noon, which Margat knew by the shadow of a certain rampike falling on the spring, a clear notification to draw fresh water for the table, Loo would hang a white rag on a pole, and Corney, seeing the signal, would return from summer fallow or hayfield, grimy, swarthy, and ruddy, a picture of manly vigour and honest toil. Thor might be away all day, but at night, when they again assembled at the table, he would come from lake or distant ridge and eat a supper like the dinner and breakfast, for meals as well as days were exact repeats: pork, bread, potatoes, and tea, with occasionally eggs supplied by a dozen hens around the little log stable, with, rarely, a variation of wild meat, for Thor was not a hunter, and Corney had little time for anything but the farm.

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The Lynx.

A great four-foot basswood had gone the way of all trees. Death had been generous—had sent the three warnings: it was the biggest of its kind, its children were grown up, it was hollow. The wintry blast that sent it down had broken it across and revealed a great hole where should have been its heart. A long, wooden cavern in the middle of a sunny opening it now lay, and presented an ideal home for a lynx when she sought a sheltered nesting-place for her coming brood.

Old was she and gaunt, for this was a year of hard times for the lynxes. A rabbit plague the autumn before had swept away their main support; a winter of deep snow and sudden crusts had killed off nearly all the partridges; a long, wet spring had destroyed the few growing coveys, and had kept the ponds and streams so full that fish and frogs were safe from their armed paws, and the mother lynx fared no better than her kind.

The little ones—half starved before they came—were a double drain, for they took the time she might have spent in hunting.

The northern hare is the favourite food of the lynx, and in some years she could have killed fifty in one day, but never one did she see this season. The plague had done its work too well.

One day she caught a red-squirrel which had run into a hollow log that proved a trap. Another day a fetid blacksnake was her only food. A day was missed, and the little ones whined piteously for their natural food and failing drink. One day she saw a large, black animal of unpleasant but familiar smell, then swift and silent sprang to make attack. She struck it once on the nose, but the porcupine doubled his head under, his tale flew up, and the mother lynx was speared in a dozen places with the little stinging javelins. She drew them all with her teeth, for she had "learned porcupine" years before, and only the hard push of want would have made her strike one now.

A frog was all she caught that day, yet on the next, as she ranged the farthest woods in a long, hard hunt, she heard a singular calling voice. It was new to her. She approached it cautiously, up wind, got many new odours, and some more strange sounds in coming. The loud, clear, rolling call was repeated as the mother lynx came to an opening in the forest. In the middle of it were two enormous musk-rat- or beaver-houses, far bigger than the biggest she ever before had seen. They were made partly of logs, and situated, not in a pond, but on a dry knoll; and walking about were a number of partridges—that is, birds like partridges, only larger and of various colours, red, yellow, and white.

All her nature was aroused. Food—food—abundance of food, and the old huntress sank to earth. Her breast was on the ground, her elbows above her back, as she made stalk, her shrewdest, subtlest stalk; one of those partridges she must have at any price; no trick now must go untried, no error in this hunt; if it took hours—all day—she must approach with certainty to win before the quarry took to flight.

Only a few bounds it was from wood shelter to the great rat-house, but she was an hour in crawling that small space. From stump to brush, from log to bunch of grass she sneaked, a flattened form, and the partridges saw her not. They fed about, the biggest uttering the ringing call that first had fallen on her ear. Once they seemed to be conscious of their peril, but a long await dispelled the fear. Now they were almost in reach, and she trembled with all the eagerness of the hunting heart and the hungry maw. Her eye centred on a white one not quite the nearest, but the colour seemed to hold her gaze.

There was an open space around the rat-house; outside that were tall weeds, and stumps were scattered everywhere. The white bird wandered behind these weeds, the red one of the loud voice flew to the top of the rat-mound and sang as before. The mother lynx sank lower yet. It seemed an alarm note; but no, the white one still was there; she could see its feathers gleaming through the weeds. An open space now lay about. The huntress, flattened like an empty skin, trailed slow and silent on the ground behind a log no thicker than her neck; if she could reach that tuft of brush, she could get unseen to the weeds, and then would be near enough to spring. She could smell them now—the rich and potent smell of life, of flesh and blood, that set her limbs a-tingle and her eyes aglow.

The partridges still scratched and fed: another flew to the high top, but the white one remained. Five more slow-gliding, silent steps, and the lynx was behind the weeds, the white bird shining through; she gauged the distance, tried the footing, swung her hind-legs to clear some fallen brush, then *leaped* direct with all her force, and the white

"Swift and silent sprang to make attack."

one never knew the death it died, for the great grey shadow dropped, the swift and deadly paws did their work, and before the other birds could realise the foe or fly, the lynx was gone, with the white bird squirming in her jaws.

With an unnecessary growl of inborn ferocity and joy she bounded into the forest, and, bee-like, sped for home. The last quiver had gone from the warm body of the victim when she heard the sound of heavy feet ahead. She leaped on a log. The

wings of her prey were muffling her eyes, so she laid the bird down and held it safely with one paw. The sound drew nearer, the bushes bent, and a boy stepped into view. The old lynx knew and hated his kind. She had watched them at night, had followed them, had been hunted and hurt by them. For a moment they stood face to face. The

"Two enormous musk-rat-houses."

huntress growled a warning that was a challenge and a defiance too, picked up the bird, and bounded from the log into the sheltering bushes. It was a mile or two to the den, but she stayed not to eat till the sunlit opening and the big basswood came to view; then a low "*Prr—prr*" called forth the little ones to revel with their mother in a plenteous meal of the choicest food.

The Home of the Lynx.

At first, Thor, being town-bred, was timid about venturing into the woods beyond the sound of Corney's axe; but day by day he went farther, guiding himself, not by unreliable moss on trees, but by sun, compass, and landscape features. His purpose was to learn about the wild animals rather than to kill them; but the naturalist and the sportsman are close akin, and the gun was his constant companion. In the clearing the only animal of any size was a fat woodchuck: it had a hole under a stump some hundred yards from the shanty. On sunny mornings it used to lie basking on the stump, but eternal vigilance is the price of every good thing in the woods. The woodchuck was always alert, and Thor tried in vain to shoot or even to trap him.

"Hyar!" said Corney one morning, "time we had some fresh meat." He took down his rifle, an old-fashioned, brass-mounted small-bore, and loading with care that showed the true rifleman, he steadied the weapon against the door-jamb and fired. The woodchuck fell backward and lay still. Thor raced to the place and returned in triumph with the animal, shouting: "Plumb through the head—one hundred and twenty yards!"

Corney controlled the gratified smile that wrestled with the corners of his mouth, but his bright eyes shone a trifle brighter for the moment.

It was no mere killing for killing's sake, for the woodchuck was spreading a belt of destruction in the crop around his den. His flesh supplied the family with more than one good meal, and Corney showed Thor how to use the skin. First the pelt was wrapped in hardwood ashes for twenty-four hours. This brought the hair off. Then the skin was soaked for three days in soft soap, and worked by hand, as it dried, till it came out a white, strong leather.

Thor's wanderings extended farther in search of the things which always came as surprises, however much he was looking for them. Many days were blanks, and others would be crowded with incident, for the unexpectedness is above all the peculiar feature of hunting, and its lasting charm.

One day Thor had gone without a gun, as he meant only to gather some curious plants he had seen. They were close to the clearing; he knew the place by a fallen elm. As he came to it he heard a peculiar sound. Then on the log his eye caught two moving

"There stood the old one, looking big and fierce as a tigress."

things. He lifted a bough and got a clear view. They were the head and tail of an enormous lynx. It had seen him, and was glaring and grumbling; and under its foot on the log was a white bird, that a second glance showed to be one of their own precious hens. How fierce and cruel the brute looked! How Thor hated it! and fairly gnashed his teeth with disgust that now, when his greatest chance was come, he for once was without his gun! He was in not a little fear, too, and stood wondering what to do. The lynx growled louder; its stumpy tail twitched viciously for a minute, then it picked up its victim, and leaping from the log, was lost to view.

It was a very rainy summer; the woods were wet and soft everywhere, and the young hunter was led to follow tracks that would have defied an expert in drier times. One day he came on piglike footprints in the woods. He trailed them with little difficulty, for they were new, and a heavy rain two hours before had wiped out all other trails. After following for half a mile, they led him to a little, open ravine, and as he reached its brow he saw across it a flash of white; then his keen, young eyes made out the forms of a deer and a spotted fawn gazing at him curiously. Though he was on the trail, they gave him a start. The mother turned and raised the danger flag, her white tail, and bounded lightly away, to be followed by the youngster, clearing low logs with an effortless leap, or bending down with catlike suppleness when they came to a log upraised, so that they might pass below it.

He never again got a chance to shoot at them, though more than once he saw the same two tracks, or believed they were the same, as for some cause deer were scarcer in that unbroken forest than they were in later years when clearings spread around.

He never saw *them*; but he saw the mother once—he thought it was the same—she was searching the woods with her nose, trying the ground for trails; she was nervous and anxious. Thor remembered a trick that Corney had told him. He gently stooped, took up a broad blade of grass, laid it between the edges of his thumbs, then blowing through this simple squeaker, he made a short, shrill bleat, a fair imitation of a fawn's cry for the mother, and the deer, though a long way off, came bounding towards him. He snatched up his gun, meaning to kill her, but the movement caught her eye. She stopped. Her mane bristled a little; she sniffed and looked inquiringly at him. Her big, soft eyes touched his heart, held back his hand; she took a cautious step nearer, got a full whiff of her mortal enemy, bounded behind a big tree, and away before his merciful impulse was gone. "Poor thing!" said Thor; "I believe she has lost her little one."

Yet once more the boy met a lynx in the

woods. Half an hour after seeing the lonely deer he crossed the long ridge that lay some miles north of the shanty. He had passed the glade where the great basswood lay, when a creature like a big, bob-tailed kitten appeared and looked innocently at him. His gun went up, as usual, but the kitten merely cocked its head on one side and fearlessly surveyed him. Then a second one that he had not noticed before began to play with the first, pawing at its tail and inviting its brother to tussle. Thor's first thought to shoot was stayed as he watched their gambols, but the remembrance of his feud with their race brought him back to the gun. He had almost raised it when a fierce rumble close at hand gave him a start, and there, not ten feet from him, stood the old one, looking big and fierce as a tigress. It was surely folly to shoot at the young ones now. The boy nervously dropped some buckshot on the charge while the snarling growl rose and fell; but before he was ready to shoot at her, the old one had picked up something; the boy got a glimpse of rich brown with white spots—the limp form of a newly killed fawn. Then she passed out of sight. The kittens followed, and he saw her no more until the time when, life against life, they were weighed in the balance together.

The Terror of the Woods.

Six weeks had passed in daily routine, when one day the young giant seemed unusually quiet as he went about. His handsome face was very sober, and he sang not at all that morning.

He and Thor slept on a hay-bunk in one corner of the main room, and that night the boy awakened more than once to hear his companion groaning and tossing in his sleep.

Corney arose as usual in the morning and fed the horses, but lay down again while the sisters got breakfast. He roused himself by an effort and went back to work, but came home early. He was trembling from head to foot. It was hot summer weather, but he could not be kept warm. After several hours, a reaction set in, and Corney was in a high fever. The family knew well now that he had the dreaded chills and fever of the backwoods. Margat went out and gathered an armful of pipsissewa to make tea, of which Corney was encouraged to drink copiously.

But in spite of all their herbs and nursing, the young man got worse. At the end of ten days he was greatly reduced in flesh and incapable of work, so on one of the "well days" that are usual in the course of the disease he said—

"Say, gurruls, I can't stand it no longer. Guess I'd better go home. I'm well enough to drive to-day—for a while, anyway; if I'm took down, I'll lay in the wagon, and the horses will fetch me home. Mother'll have me all right in a week or so. If you run out of grub before I come back, take the canoe to Ellerton's."

So the girls harnessed the horses; the wagon was partly filled with hay, and Corney, weak and white-faced, drove away on the long, rough road, and left them feeling much as though they were on a desert island, and their only boat had been taken from them.

Half a week had scarcely gone by before all three of them, Margat, Loo, and Thor, were taken down with a yet more virulent form of chills and fever.

Corney had had every other a "well day," but with the others there were no "well days," and the house became an abode of misery.

Seven days went by, and now Margat could not leave her bed, and Loo was barely able to walk around the house. She was a brave girl, with a fund of drollery which did much towards keeping up all their spirits, but her merriest jokes fell ghastly from her wan, pinched face. Thor, though weak and ill, was the strongest, and did for the others, cooking and serving each day a simple meal; for they could eat very little—fortunately, perhaps, as there was very little, and Corney could not arrive for another week.

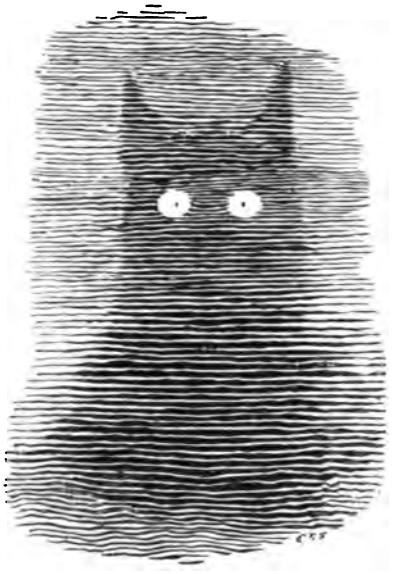
Soon Thor was the only one able to rise, and one morning when he dragged himself to cut the little, usual slice of their treasured bacon, he found, to his horror, that the whole piece was gone. It had been stolen, doubtless, by some wild animal, from the little box on the shady side of the house where it was kept safe from flies. Now they were down to flour and tea. He was in despair, when his eye lighted on the chickens about the stable. But what's the use? In his feeble state he might as well try to catch a deer or a hawk. Suddenly he remembered his gun, and very soon was preparing a fat hen for the pot. He boiled it whole as the easiest way to cook it, and the broth was the first really tempting food they had for some time.

They kept alive for three wretched days on that chicken, and when it was finished, Thor again took down his gun—it seemed a much heavier gun now. He crawled to the barn, but he was so weak and shaky that he

missed several times before he brought down a fowl. Corney had taken the rifle away with him, and three charges of gun ammunition were all that now remained.

Thor was surprised to see how few hens there were now—only three. There used to be over a dozen. Three days later he made another raid. He saw but one hen, and he used up his last ammunition to get that.

His daily routine now was a monotony of horror. In the morning, which was his "well time," he prepared a little food for the household and got ready for the night of raging fever by putting a bucket of water



"Two glaring eyes."

on a block at the head of each bunk. About one o'clock, with fearful regularity, the chills would come on: trembling from head to foot, teeth chattering; cold, cold, within and without; nothing seemed to give any warmth—fire seemed to have lost its power; there was nothing to do but to lie and shake, and suffer all the slow torture of freezing to death and shaking to pieces. For six hours it would keep up, and to the torture nausea lent its horrid aid throughout; then about seven or eight o'clock in the evening, a change would come: a burning fever set in; no ice could have seemed cool to him then—water—water—was all he craved, and drank until four in the morning, when the fever would abate, and a sleep of total exhaustion follow.

"If you run out of food, take the canoe to Ellerton's," was the brother's last word. Who was to take the canoe?

There was but half a chicken now between them and starvation, and no sign of Corney. Despair was on the house, and the silent cry of each was: "Oh, God! will Corney never come?"

The Home of the Boy.

On the day of that last chicken, Thor was all the morning carrying water enough for the coming three fevers. The chill attacked him sooner than it was due, and his fever was worse than ever before.

He drank deeply and often from the bucket at his head. He had filled it, and it was nearly emptied, when about two in the morning the fever left him, and he fell asleep.

In the grey dawn he was awakened by a splashing of water. He turned his head, to see two glaring eyes within a foot of his face—a great beast lapping the water in the bucket by his bed.

Thor gazed in horror for a moment, then closed his eyes, sure that he was dreaming, certain that this was a nightmare of India, with a tiger by his couch; but the lapping continued. He looked up; yes, it still was there. He tried to find his voice, but uttered only a gurgle. The great, furry head quivered, a growl came from below the shining eyeballs, and the creature, whatever it was, dropped to its front feet and glided across the hut. Thor rose feebly on his elbow and shouted "Sssh-hi!" at which the shining eyes reappeared under the table, and the grey form came forth. Calmly it walked across the ground and glided under the lowest log at a place where an old potato-pit left an opening, and disappeared.

What was it? The sick boy hardly knew—some savage beast, undoubtedly. He was totally unnerved. He shook with fear and a sense of helplessness, and the night passed in fitful sleep and sudden starts awake to search the gloom again for those fearful eyes and the great grey, gliding form. In the morning he did not know whether it were not all a delirium, yet he made a feeble effort to close the old cellar-hole with some firewood.

The three had little appetite, but even that they restrained, since now they were down to part of a chicken, and Corney evidently supposed they had been to Ellerton's and got all the food they needed.

Again, that night, when the fever left him weak and dozing, Thor was awakened by a sound in the room, a sound of crunching bones. He looked around, to see, dimly outlined against the little window, the form

of a large animal on the table. Thor shouted; he tried to hurl his boot at the intruder. It leaped lightly to the ground and passed out of the hole, again wide open.

It was no dream this time, he knew, and the women knew it, too; not only had they heard the creature, but the chicken, the last of their food, was wholly gone.

Poor Thor barely left his couch that day. It needed all the querulous complaints of the sick women to drive him forth. Down by the spring he found a few berries, and divided them with the others. He made his usual preparations for the chills and the thirst, but he added this—by the side of his couch he put an old fish-spear—the only weapon he could find, now the gun was useless—a pine-root candle, and some matches. He knew the beast was coming back again. It would find no food; what more natural, he thought, than to take the living prey lying there so helpless? And a vision came of the limp, brown form of the little fawn, borne off in those same cruel jaws.

Once again he barricaded the hole with firewood, and the night passed as usual, but without any fierce visitor. Their food that day was flour and water, and to cook it Thor was forced to use some of his barricade. Loo attempted some feeble joke—guessed she was light enough to fly now, and tried to rise, but she got no farther than the edge of the bunk. The same preparations were made, and the night wore on, but early in the morning Thor was again awakened rudely by the sound of lapping water by his bed, and there, as before, were the glowing eyeballs, the great head, the grey form relieved by the dim light from the dawning window.

Thor put all his strength into what was meant for a bold shout, but it was merely a feeble screech. He rose slowly and called out: "Loo, Margat! The lynx—here's the lynx again!"

"May God help ye, for we can't!" was the answer.

"Ssh-hi!" Thor tried again to drive the beast away. It leaped on to the table by the window and stood up growling under the useless gun. Thor thought it was going to leap through the glass as it faced the window a moment; but it turned and glared towards the boy, for he could see both eyes shining. He rose slowly to the side of his bunk and he prayed for help, for he felt it was kill or be killed. He struck a match and lighted his pine-root candle, held that in his left hand, and in his right took the old fish-spear, meaning to fight; but he was so weak, he had to use the fish-spear as a crutch. The great beast stood on the table still, but was crouching a little as though for a spring. Its eyes glowed red in the torchlight. Its short tail was switching from side to side, and its growling took a higher pitch. Thor's knees were smiting together, but he levelled the spear and made a feeble lunge towards the brute. It sprang at the same moment, not at him, as he first thought—the torch and the boy's bold front had had effect—it went over his head, to drop on the ground beyond, and at once to slink under the bunk.

This was only a temporary repulse. Thor set the torch on a ledge of the logs, then took the spear in both hands. He was fighting for his life, and he knew it. He heard the voices of the women feebly praying. He saw only the glowing eyes under the bed, and heard the growling in higher pitch as the beast was nearing action. He steadied himself by a great effort and plunged the spear with all the force he could give it.

It struck something softer than the logs; a hideous snarl came forth. The boy threw all his weight on the weapon; the beast was struggling to get at him; he felt its teeth and claws grating on the handle, and in spite of himself it was coming on; its powerful arms and claws were reaching for him now; he could not hold out long. He put on all his force, just a little more it was than before; the beast lurched, there was a growling, a crack, a sudden yielding, the rotten old spear-head had broken off, the beast sprang out—at him—past him—never touched him, but across through the hole and away, to be seen no more.

Thor fell on the bed and lost all consciousness.

He lay there he knew not how long, but was awakened in broad daylight by a loud, cheery voice—

"Hello! Hello!—are ye all dead?"

He had no strength to answer, but there was a trampling of horses outside, a heavy step, the door was forced open, and in strode Corney, handsome and hearty as ever. But what a flash of horror and pain came on his face on entering the silent shanty!

"Dead?" he gasped. "Who's dead—where are you? Thor?" Then: "Who is it? Loo? Margat?"

"Corney—Corney," came feebly from the bunk. "They're in there. They're awful sick. We have nothing to eat."

"Oh, what a fool I be!" said Corney again and again. "I made sure ye'd go to Ellerton's and get all ye wanted."

"We had no chance, Corney; we were

"He made a feeble lunge towards the brute."

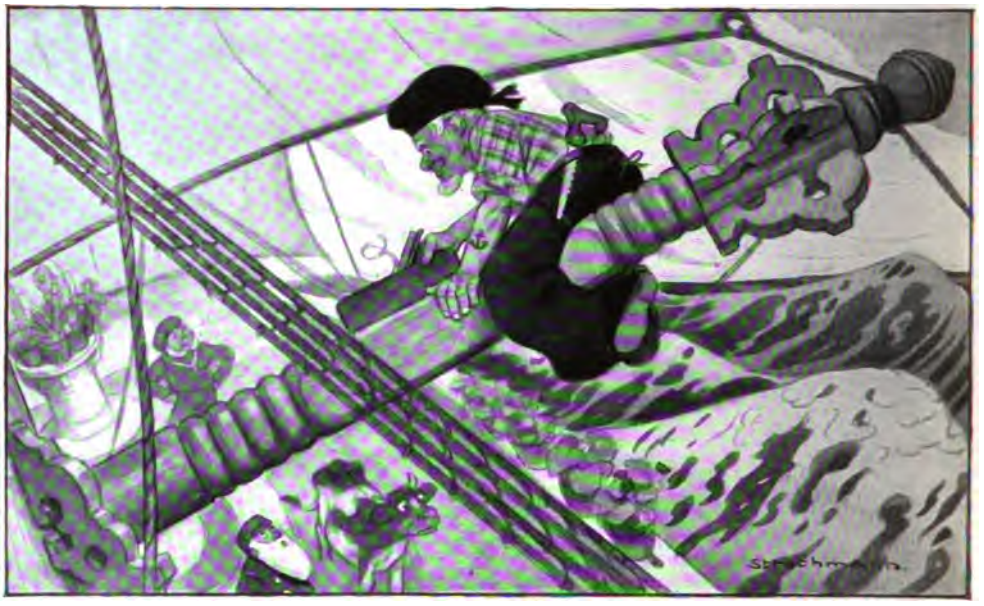
all three brought down at once, right after you left. Then the lynx came and cleared up the hens, and all in the house, too."

"Well, ye got even with her," and Corney pointed to the trail of blood across the mud floor and out under the logs.

* * * * *

Good food, nursing, and medicine restored them all. A month or two later, when the women wanted a new leaching-barrel, Thor said: "I know where there is a hollow basswood as big as a hogshead."

He and Corney went to the place, and when they cut off what they needed, they found in the far end of it the dried-up bodies of two little lynxes, with that of the mother, and by the side of the old one was the head of a fish-spear broken from the handle.



"He scroll-sawed all the masts and spars."

Industrious Carpenter Dan.

By WALLACE IRWIN.

An honest man that loves his trade
Deserves me honest grip;
And Carpenter Dan was a handy man
To have about a ship.

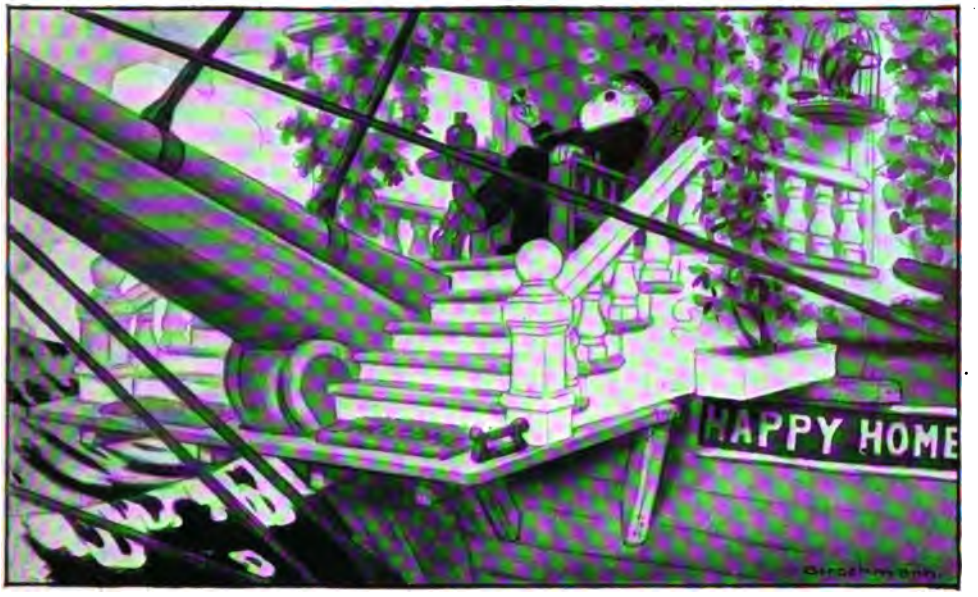
The things he couldn't hammer up
Them things he hammered down;
He mended the sails with screws and nails,
And done his business brown.

He scroll-sawed all the masts and spars,
And varnished 'em with ile,
Then he shingled the poop of our gallant sloop
With a gable, Queen Anne style.

Along the basement port-hole sills
He worked for hours and hours,
A-building tiers of jardineers
And planting 'em with flowers.

He filled the decks with rustic seats,
And many a grape-vine swing;
A handy man was Carpenter Dan,
For he thought of everything.

Then pretty soon he got a scheme
To ease the Capting's care,
So he fitted the sloop with a fine front stoop
With rugs and Morris chairs.



"He fitted the sloop with a fine front stoop."

One day when he was drinking tea—
The Capting and his crew—
To our great surprise we heard arise
An awful hulleroo.

The Capting looked across the rail,
And sort of chawed his lip—
For Carpenter Dan was building an
Extension to the ship!

"A double ship with a Queen Anne dip."

"Avast there, Dan!" the Capting cried,
"What have you gone to do?"
"Don't bother me, man," said Carpenter Dan,
"I'm fixing things for you."

Then he toe-nailed on a rafter beam,
And sawed a two-by-four;
Then giving a yank to a six-inch plank,
He started on the floor.

So Dan he worked three solid weeks,
Till on a happy day,
A double ship with a Queen Anne dip,
We sailed into the bay.

And from that lean-to, homestead ship
We vowed no more to roam;
From the window-panes to the weather-vanes
We loved our floating home.

And as we sat among the vines
On many an ocean trip,
We vowed that Dan was a handy man
To have aboard a ship.

"We loved our floating home."

AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Sheltered awhile in a Buddhist monastery, they hear of the recent visit of a stranger who has told the Lamas that his countryfolk, "dwelling beyond the Far Mountains," worship a priestess called Hes, or the Hesea, and upon persuasion the abbot of the monastery tells them that in a former incarnation he himself has seen the great priestess, who was "all loveliness." A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." The symbol vanishes, the fire sinks, but they are sure that as it was sent of old to show them a path of escape from the Place of Death, so now it has been sent again in greeting to point out the path to the Place of Life where Ayesha dwells. A further ascent into the mountains reveals their Promised Land, with the symbol of their vision, an enormous pillar of rock, whereof the top was formed to the shape of a loop. Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the Hesea of the "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers and bring them safely to the Mountain. But Atene's love for Leo makes her detain the travellers awhile in Kaloon, and she even proposes that the Khan shall be murdered so that she can wed Leo. To this the Englishman replies: "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire." The Khan himself assists the escape of the travellers for their further journey, but his jealousy has been aroused, and after they have set out on their journey to the fire-crowned Mountain he pursues them with his death-hounds. After a long chase, a few of the brutes, and the Khan, overtake them, and a terrible struggle ensues, in which Leo and Holly eventually prove the victors. The Khan is slain, but ere he dies he warns them to beware of Atene, adding that their only hope of safety lies in reaching the fire-crowned Mountain. Not long afterwards the Khania and Simbri overtake them and seek to persuade them to return, but they refuse. The Khania leaves them, saying: "We do not part thus easily. You have summoned me to the Mountain, and even to the Mountain I will follow you. Aye, and there I will meet its spirit. . . . I will match my strength and magic against hers, as it is decreed that I shall do." Preserved by priestly intervention from death at the hands of a strange people, they realise that they are nearing the sphere of influence of the mysterious Hesea.

CHAPTER XIII.

BENEATH THE SHADOWING WINGS.

ONE by one the terrified tribesmen crept away. When the last of them were gone, the priest advanced to Leo and saluted him by placing his hand upon his forehead.

"Lord," he said, in the same corrupt Grecian dialect which was used by the courtiers of Kaloon, "I will not ask if you are hurt, since from the moment that you entered the sacred river and set foot within this land you and your companion were protected by a power invisible, and could not be harmed by man or spirit, however great may have seemed your danger. Yet vile hands have been laid upon you, and this is the command of the Mother whom I serve, that, if you desire it, every one of these men who touched you shall die before your eyes. Say, is that your will?"

"Nay," answered Leo; "they were mad and blind—let no blood be shed for us. All we ask of you, friend—but how are you called?"

"Name me Oros," he answered.

"Friend Oros—a good title for one who dwells upon the Mountain—all we ask is food and shelter, and to be led swiftly into the presence of her whom you name Mother, that Oracle whose wisdom we have travelled far to seek."

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He bowed and answered: "The food and shelter are prepared, and to-morrow, when you have rested, I am commanded to conduct you whither you desire to be. Follow me, I pray you"; and he preceded us past the fiery pit to a building that stood about fifty yards away against the rock wall of the amphitheatre.

It would seem that it was a guest-house, or at least had been made ready to serve that purpose, as in it lamps were lit and a fire burned, for here the air was cold. The house was divided into two rooms, the second of them a sleeping-place, to which he led us through the first.

"Enter," he said, "for you will need to cleanse yourselves, and you"—here he addressed himself to me—"to be treated for that hurt to your arm which you had from the jaws of the great hound."

"How know you that?" I asked.

"It matters not, if I do know and have made ready," Oros answered gravely.

This second room was lighted and warmed like the first; moreover, heated water stood in basins of metal, and on the beds were laid clean linen garments and dark-coloured, hooded robes, lined with rich fur. Also upon a little table were ointments, bandages, and splints, a marvellous thing to see, for it told me that the very nature of my hurt had been divined. But I asked no more questions; I was too weary; moreover, I knew that it would be useless.

Now the priest Oros helped me to remove my tattered robe, and undoing the rough bandages upon my arm, washed it gently with warm water, in which he mixed some spirit, and examined it with the skill of a trained doctor.

"The fangs rent deep," he said, "and the small bone is broken, but you will take no harm, save for the scars which must remain," Then, having treated the wounds with ointment, he wrapped the limb with such a delicate touch that it scarcely pained me, saying that by the morrow the swelling would have gone down, and he would set the bone. This indeed happened.

After it was done, he helped me to wash and to clothe myself in the clean garments, and put a sling about my neck to serve as a rest for my arm. Meanwhile Leo had also dressed himself, so that we left the chamber together very different men from the foul, blood-stained wanderers who had entered there. In the outer room we found food prepared for us, of which we ate with a thankful heart and without speaking. Then, blind with weariness, we returned to the other chamber and, having removed our outer garments, flung ourselves upon the beds and were soon plunged in sleep.

At some time in the night I awoke suddenly, at what hour I do not know, as certain people wake, I among them, when their room is entered, even without the slightest noise. Before I opened my eyes, I felt that someone was with us in the place. Nor was I mistaken. A little lamp still burned in the chamber, a mere wick floating in oil, and by its light I saw a dim, ghost-like form standing near the door. Indeed, I thought almost that it was a ghost, till presently I remembered, and knew it for our corpselike guide, who appeared to be looking intently at the bed on which Leo lay—or so I thought, for the head was bent in that direction.

At first she was quite still, then she moaned aloud, a low and terrible moan, which seemed to well from the very heart.

So the thing was not dumb, as I had believed. Evidently it could suffer, and express its suffering in a human fashion. Look! it was wringing its padded hands as in an excess of woe. Now it would seem that Leo began to feel its influence also, for he stirred and spoke in his sleep, so low at first that I could only distinguish the tongue he used, which was Arabic. Presently I caught a few words.

"Ayesha," he said, "*Ayesha!*"

The figure glided towards him and stopped. He sat up in the bed, still fast asleep, for his eyes were shut. He stretched out his arms as though seeking one whom he would embrace, and spoke again in a low and passionate voice—

"Ayesha, through life and death I have sought thee long. Come to me, my goddess, my desired!"

The figure glided yet nearer, and I could see that it was trembling, and now its arms were extended also.

At the bedside it halted, and Leo laid himself down again. Now the coverings had fallen back, exposing his breast, where lay the leather satchel he always wore, that which contained the lock of Ayesha's hair. He was fast asleep, and the figure seemed to fix its eyes upon this satchel. Presently it did more, for, with surprising deftness, those white-wrapped fingers opened its clasp—yes, and drew out the long tress of shining hair. Long and earnestly she gazed at it, then gently replaced the relic, closed the satchel, and for a little while seemed to weep. While

she stood thus, the dreaming Leo once more stretched out his arms and spoke, saying, in the same passion-laden voice—

"Come to me, my darling, my beautiful, my beautiful!"

At those words, with a little muffled scream, like that of a scared night-bird, the figure turned and flitted through the doorway.

* * * * *

When I was quite certain that she had gone, I gasped aloud.

What might this mean? I wondered, in a very agony of bewilderment. This could certainly be no dream: it was real, for I was wide awake. Indeed, what did it all mean? Who was the ghastly, mummylike thing which had guided us unharmed through such terrible dangers—the Messenger that all men feared, who could strike down a brawny savage with a motion of its hand? Why did it creep into the place thus at dead of night, like a spirit revisiting one beloved? Why did its presence cause me to awake and Leo to dream? Why did it draw out the tress—indeed, how knew it that this tress was hidden there? And why—oh! why, at those tender and passionate words did it flee away at last like some scared bat?

The priest Oros had called our guide Minister, and Sword—that is, one who carries out decrees. But what if they were its own decrees? What if the thing should be she whom we sought, *Ayesha herself?* Why should I tremble at the thought, seeing that, if so, our quest was ended, we had achieved? Oh! it must be because about this being there was something terrible, something unhuman and appalling. If Ayesha lived within those mummy-cloths, then it was a different Ayesha whom we had known and worshipped. Well could I remember the white-draped form of *She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed*, and how, long before she revealed her glorious face to us, we guessed the beauty and the majesty hidden beneath that veil by which her radiant life and loveliness incarnate could not be disguised.

But what of this creature? I would not pursue the thought. I was mistaken. Doubtless she was what the priest Oros had said—some half-supernatural being to whom certain powers were given, and, doubtless, she had come to spy on us in our rest, that she might make report to the giver of those powers.

Comforting myself thus, I fell asleep again, for fatigue overcame even such doubts and fears. In the morning, when they were naturally less vivid, I made up my mind that, for various reasons, it would be wisest to say nothing of what I had seen to Leo. Nor, indeed, did I say so until some days had gone by.

When I awoke, the full light was pouring into the chamber, and by it I saw the priest Oros standing at my bedside. I sat up and asked him what time it was, to which he answered with a smile, but in a low voice, that it lacked but two hours of midday, adding that he had come to set my arm. Now I saw why he spoke low, for Leo was still fast asleep.

"Let him rest on," he said, as he undid the wrappings on my arm, "for he has suffered much, and," he continued significantly, "may still have more to suffer."

"What do you mean, friend Oros?" I asked sharply. "I thought you told us that we were safe upon this Mountain."

"I told you, friend——" and he looked at me.

"Holly is my name——"

"—friend Holly, that your bodies are safe. I said nothing of all the rest of you. Man is more than flesh and blood. He is mind and spirit as well, and these can be injured also."

"Who is there that would injure them?" I asked.

"Friend," he answered gravely, "you and your companion have come to a haunted land, not as mere wanderers, for then you would be dead ere now, but of set purpose, seeking to lift the veil from mysteries which have been hid for ages. Well, your aim is known, and it may chance that it will be achieved. But if this veil is lifted, it may chance also that you will find what shall send your souls shivering to despair and madness. Say, are you not afraid?"

"Somewhat," I answered. "Yet my foster-son and I have seen strange things and lived. We have seen the very Light of Life roll by in majesty; we have been the guests of an Immortal, and watched Death seem to conquer her and leave us untouched. Think you then that we will turn cowards now? Nay, we march on to fulfil our destinies."

At these words Oros showed neither curiosity nor surprise; it was as though I told him only what he knew.

"Good," he replied, smiling, and with a courteous bow of his shaven head. "Within an hour you shall march on—to fulfil your destinies. If I have warned you, forgive me, for I was bidden so to do, perhaps to try your mettle. Is it needful that I should

repeat this warning to the lord—— ?" and again he looked at me.

"Leo Vincey," I said.

"Leo Vincey—yes, Leo Vincey," he repeated, as though the name were familiar to him but had slipped his mind. "But you have not answered my question. Is it needful that I should repeat the warning ?"

"Not in the least; but you can do so if you wish when he awakes."

"Nay, I think with you, that it would be but waste of words, for—forgive the comparison—what the wolf dares"—and he looked at me—"the tiger does not flee from," and he nodded towards Leo. "There, see how much better are the wounds upon your arm, which is no longer swollen. Now I will bandage it, and within some few weeks the bone will be as sound again as it was before you met the Khan Rassen hunting in the plains. By the way, you will see him again soon, and his fair wife with him."

"See him again? Do the dead, then, come to life upon this Mountain ?"

"Nay, but certain of them are brought hither for burial. It is the privilege of the rulers of Kaloon; also, I think that the Khania has questions to ask of its Oracle."

"Who is its Oracle ?" I asked with eagerness.

"The Oracle," he replied darkly, "is a Voice. It was ever so, was it not ?"

"Yes; I have heard it from Atene; but a voice implies a speaker. Is this speaker she whom you name Mother ?"

"Perhaps, friend Holly."

"And is this Mother a spirit ?"

"It is a point that has been much debated. They told you so in the Plains, did they not? Also the Tribes think it on the Mountain. Indeed, the thing seems reasonable, seeing that all of us who live are flesh and spirit. But you will form your own judgment and then we can discuss the matter. There, your arm is finished. Be careful now not to strike it or to fall; and look, your companion awakes."

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Something over an hour later we started upon our upward journey. I was again mounted on the Khan's horse, which, having been groomed and fed, was somewhat rested, while to Leo a litter had been offered. This he declined, however, saying that he had now recovered, and would not be carried like a woman. So he walked by the side of my horse, using his spear as a staff. We passed the fire-pit—now full of dead, white ashes, among which were mixed those of the witch-finder and his horrible cat—preceded by our dumb guide, at the sight of whom, in her pale wrappings, the people of the tribe, who had returned to their village, prostrated themselves, and so remained until she was gone by.

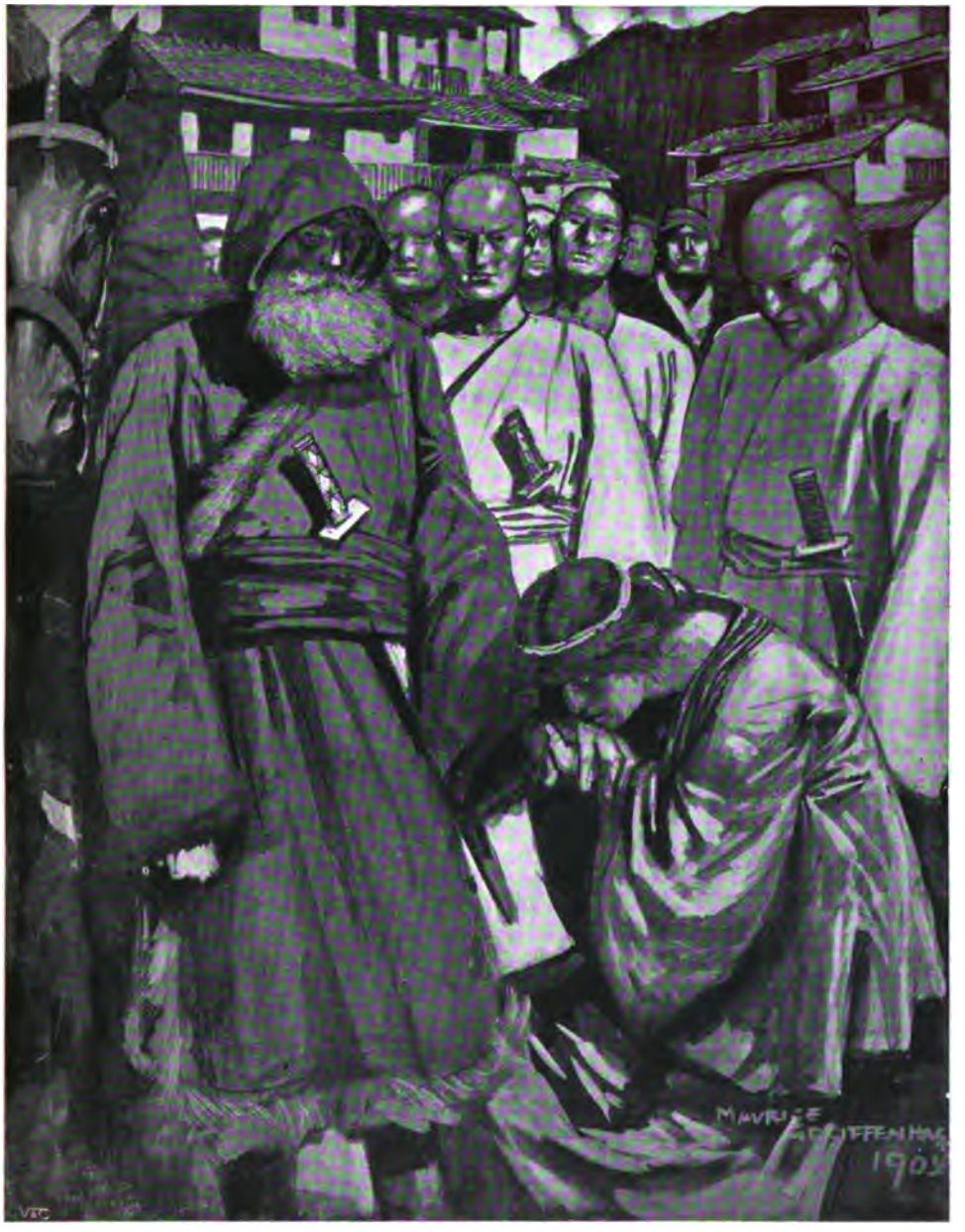
One of them, however, rose again and, breaking through our escort of priests, ran to Leo, knelt before him, and kissed his hand. It was that young woman whose life he had saved, a noble-looking girl, with masses of red hair; and by her was her husband, the marks of his bonds still showing on his arms. Our guide seemed to see this incident, though how she did so I do not know. At any rate, she turned and made some sign which the priest interpreted.

Calling the woman to him, he asked her sternly how she dared to touch the person of this stranger with her vile lips. She answered that it was because her heart was grateful. Oros said that for this reason she was forgiven; moreover, that in reward for what they had suffered he was commanded to lift up her husband to be the ruler of that tribe during the pleasure of the Mother. He gave notice, moreover, that all should obey the new chief in his place, according to their customs; and if he did any evil, make report, that he might suffer punishment. Then waving the pair aside, without listening to their thanks or the acclamations of the crowd, he passed on.

As we went down the ravine by which we had approached the village on the previous night, a sound of chanting struck our ears. Presently the path turned, and we saw a solemn procession advancing up that dismal, sunless gorge. At the head of it rode none other than the beautiful Khania, followed by her great-uncle, the old Shaman, and after these came a company of shaven priests in their white robes, bearing between them a bier, upon which, its face uncovered, lay the body of the Khan, draped in a black garment. Yet he looked better thus than he had ever done, for now death had touched this insane and dissolute man with something of the dignity which he lacked in life.

Thus, then, we met. At the sight of our guide's white form, the horse which the Khania rode reared up so violently that I thought it would have thrown her. But she mastered the animal with her whip and voice and called out—

"Who is this draped hag of the Mountain that stops the path of the Khania Atene and her dead lord ? My guests, I find you in ill company, for it seems that you are conducted



"Ran to Leo, knelt before him, and kissed his hand."

by an evil spirit to meet an evil fate. That guide of yours must surely be something hateful and hideous; for were she a wholesome woman, she would not fear to show her face."

Now the Shaman plucked his mistress by the sleeve, and the priest Oros, bowing to her, prayed her to be silent and cease to speak such ill-omened words into the air, which might carry them she knew not whither. But some instinctive hate seemed to bubble up in Atene, and she would not be silent, for she addressed our guide, using the direct "thou," a manner of speech that we found was very usual on the Mountain, though rare upon the Plains.

"Let the air carry them whither it will!" she cried. "Sorceress, strip off thy rags, fit

only for a corpse too vile to view! Show us what thou art, thou flitting night-owl, who thinkest to frighten me with that livery of death, which only serves to hide the death within!"

"Cease, I pray, lady, cease," said Oros, stirred for once out of his imperturbable calm. "She is the Minister, none other, and with her goes the Power."

"Then it goes not against Atene, Khania of Kaloon," she answered; "or so I think. Power, forsooth! Let her show her power. If she has any, it is not her own, but that of the Witch of the Mountain, who feigns to be a spirit, and by her sorceries has drawn away my guests"—and she pointed to us—"thus bringing my husband to his death."

"Niece, be silent!" said the old Shaman, whose wrinkled face was white with terror, whilst Oros held up his hands as though in supplication to some unseen Strength, saying—

"O thou that hearest and seest, be merciful, I beseech thee, and forgive this woman her madness, lest the blood of a guest should stain the hands of thy servants, and the ancient honour of our worship be brought low in the eyes of men."

Thus he prayed; but although his hands were uplifted, it seemed to me that his eyes were fixed upon our guide, as ours were. While he spoke, I saw her hand raised, as she had raised it when she slew—or, rather, sentenced—the witch-doctor. Then she seemed to reflect, and stayed it in mid-air, so that it pointed at the Khania. She did not move, she made no sound, only she pointed, and the angry words died upon Atene's lips, the fury left her eyes, and the colour her face. Yes, she grew white and silent as the corpse upon the bier behind her. Then, cowed by that invisible power, she struck her horse so fiercely that it bounded by us onward towards the village, at which the funeral company were to rest awhile.

As the Shaman Simbri followed the Khania, the priest Oros caught his horse's bridle and said to him—

"Magician, we have met before—for instance, when your lady's father was brought to his funeral. Warn her, then, you that know something of the truth and of her power, to speak more gently of the ruler of this land. Say to her, from me, that had she not been the ambassadress of Death, and therefore inviolate, surely ere now she would have shared her husband's bier. Farewell; to-morrow we will speak again," and, loosing the Shaman's bridle, Oros passed on.

Soon we had left the melancholy procession behind us, and, issuing from the gorge, turned up the Mountain slope towards the edge of the bright snows that lay not far above. It was as we came out of this darksome valley, where the overhanging pine trees almost eclipsed the light, that suddenly we missed our guide.

"Has she gone back to—to reason with the Khania?" I asked of Oros.

"Nay!" he answered, with a slight smile, "I think that she has gone forward to give warning that the Hesea's guests draw near."

"Indeed," I answered, staring hard at the bare slope of mountain, up which not a mouse could have passed without being seen. "I understand—she has gone forward," and the matter dropped. But what I did *not* understand was—how she had gone. As the Mountain was honeycombed with caves and galleries, I suppose, however, that she entered one of them.

All the rest of that day we marched upwards, gradually drawing nearer to the snowline, as we went gathering what information we could from the priest Oros. This was the sum of it—

From the beginning of the world, as he expressed it—that is, from thousands and thousands of years ago—this Mountain had been the home of a peculiar fire-worship, of which the head heirophant was a woman. About twenty centuries before, however, the invading general, named Rassen, had made himself Khan of Kaloon. Rassen established a new priestess on the Mountain, a worshipper of the Egyptian goddess, Hes, or Isis. This priestess had introduced certain modifications in the ancient doctrines, superseding the cult of fire, pure and simple, by a new faith, which, while holding to some of the old ceremonies, revered as its head the Spirit of Life or Nature, of whom they looked upon their priestess as the earthly representative.

Of this priestess Oros would only tell us that she was "ever present," although we gathered that when one priestess died, or was "taken to the fire," as he put it, her child, whether in fact or by adoption, succeeded her and was known by the same names—those of "Hes" or the "Hesea," and "Mother." We asked if we should see this Mother, to which he answered that she manifested herself very rarely. As to her appearance and attributes he would say nothing, except that the former changed from time to time, and that when she chose to use it she had "all power."

The priests of her College, he informed us, numbered three hundred, never more nor less,

and there were also three hundred priestesses. Certain of those who desired it were allowed to marry, and from among their children were reared up the new generation of priests and priestesses. Thus they were a people apart from all others, with distinct racial characteristics. This, indeed, was evident, for our escort were all exceedingly like to each other, very handsome and refined in appearance, with dark eyes, clean-cut features, and olive-hued skins; such a people as might well have descended from Easterns of high blood, with a dash of that of the Egyptians and Greeks thrown in.

We asked him whether the mighty looped pillar that towered from the topmost cup of the Mountain was the work of men. He answered; No; the hand of Nature had fashioned it, and that the light shining came from the fires which burned in the crater of the volcano. The first priestess, having recognised in this gigantic column the familiar Symbol of Life of the Egyptian worship, established her altars beneath its shadow.

For the rest, the Mountain, with its mighty slopes and borderlands, was peopled by a multitude of half-savage folk, who accepted the rule of the Hesea, bringing her tribute of all things necessary, such as food and metals. Much of the meat and grain, however, the priests raised themselves on sheltered farms, and the metals they worked with their own hands. This rule, however, was of a moral nature, since for centuries the College had sought no conquests, and the Mother contented herself with punishing crime in some such fashion as we had seen. For the petty wars between the Tribes and the people of the Plain they were not responsible, and those chiefs who carried them on were deposed, unless they had themselves been attacked. All the Tribes, however, were sworn to the defence of the Hesea and the College, and, however much they might quarrel amongst themselves, if need arose, were ready to die for her to the last man. That war must one day break out again between the priests of the Mountain and the people of Kaloon was recognised; therefore they endeavoured to be prepared for that great and final struggle.

Such was the gist of his history, which, as we learned afterwards, proved to be true in every particular.

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Towards sundown we came to a vast cup extending over many thousand acres, situated beneath the snowline of the peak, and filled with rich soil, washed down, I suppose, from above. So sheltered was the place by its configuration and the overhanging mountain that, facing south-west as it did, notwithstanding its altitude it produced corn and other temperate crops in abundance. Here the College had its farms, and very well cultivated these seemed to be. This great cup, which could not be seen from below; we entered through a kind of natural gateway, that might be easily defended against a host.

There were other peculiarities, but it is not necessary to describe them further than to say that I think the soil benefited by the natural heat of the volcano, and that when this erupted, as happened occasionally, the lava streams always passed to the north and south of the cup of land. Indeed, it was these lava streams that had built up the protecting cliffs.

Crossing the gardenlike lands, we came to a small town beautifully built of lava rock. Here dwelt the priests, except those who were on duty, no man of the Tribes or other stranger being allowed to set foot within the place.

Following the main street of this town, we arrived at the face of the precipice beyond, and found ourselves in front of a vast archway, closed with massive iron gates fantastically wrought. Here, taking my horse with them, our escort left us alone with Oros. As we drew near, the great gates swung back upon their hinges. We passed them—with what sensations I cannot describe—and groped our way down a short corridor which ended in tall, iron-covered doors. These also rolled open at our approach, and next instant we staggered back amazed and half-blinded by the intense blaze of light within.

Imagine, you who read, the nave of the vastest cathedral with which you are acquainted. Then double or treble its size, and you will have some conception of that temple in which we found ourselves. Perhaps in the beginning it had been a cave—who can say?—but now its sheer walls, its multitudinous columns springing to the arched roof far above us, had all been worked on and fashioned by the labour of men long dead; doubtless the old fire-worshippers of thousands of years ago.

You will wonder how so great a place was lighted, but I think that never would you guess. Thus—by twisted columns of living flame! I counted eighteen of them, but

there may have been others. They sprang from the floor at regular intervals along the lines of what in a cathedral would be the aisles. Right to the roof they sprang, of even height and girth, so fierce was the force that drove them, and there were lost, I suppose, through chimneys bored in the thickness of the rock. Nor did they give off smell or smoke, or in that great, cold place, any heat which could be noticed, only an intense, white light like that of molten iron, and a sharp, hissing noise as of a million angry snakes.

The huge temple was utterly deserted, and, save for this sibilant, pervading sound, utterly silent; an awsome, an overpowering place.

"Do these candles of yours ever go out?" asked Leo of Oros, placing his hand before his dazzled eyes.

"How can they," replied the priest in his smooth, matter-of-fact voice, "seeing that they rise from the eternal fire which the builders of this hall worshipped? Thus they have burned from the beginning, and thus they will burn for ever, though, if we wish it, we can shut off their light.* Be pleased to follow me: you will see greater things."

So in awed silence we followed, and, oh! how small and miserable we three human beings looked, alone in that vast temple illuminated by this lightning radiance! We reached the end of it at length, only to find that to right and left ran transepts on a like gigantic scale, and lit in the same amazing fashion. Here Oros bade us halt, and we waited a little while, till presently, from either transept, arose a sound of chanting, and we perceived two white-robed processions advancing towards us from their depths.

On they came, very slowly, and we saw that the procession to the right was a company of priests, and that to the left a company of priestesses, a hundred or so of them in all.

Now the men ranged themselves in front of us, while the women ranged themselves behind, and at a signal from Oros, all of them still chanting some wild and thrilling hymn, once more we started forward, this time along a narrow gallery closed at the end with double wooden doors. As our procession reached these, they opened, and before us lay the crowning wonder of this marvellous fane—a vast, ellipse-shaped apse. Now we understood. The plan of the temple was the plan of the looped pillar which stood upon the brow of the Peak, and, as we rightly guessed, its dimensions were the same.

At intervals around this ellipse the fiery columns flared, but otherwise the place was empty.

No, not quite, for at the head of the apse, almost between two of the flame columns, stood a plain, square altar of the size of a small room, in front of which, as we saw when we drew nearer, were hung curtains of woven silver thread. On this altar was placed a large statue of silver, that, backed as it was by the black rock, seemed to concentrate and reflect from its burnished surface the intense light of the two blazing pillars.

It was a lovely thing, but to describe it is hard indeed. The figure, which was winged, represented a draped woman of mature years, and pure but gracious form, half hidden by the forward-bending wings. Sheltered by these, yet shown between them, appeared the image of a male child, clasped to its bearer's breast with her left arm, while the right was raised towards the sky. A study of motherhood, evidently; but how shall I write of all that was conveyed by those graven faces?

To begin with the child. It was that of a sturdy boy, full of health and the joy of life. Yet he had been sleeping, and in his sleep some terror had overshadowed him with the dark shades of death and evil. There was fear in the lines of his sweet mouth and on the lips and cheeks, that seemed to quiver. He had thrown his little arm about his mother's neck, and, pressing close against her breast, looked up to her for safety, his right hand and outstretched finger pointing downwards and behind him, as though to indicate whence the danger came. Yet it was passing, already half-forgotten, for the upturned eyes expressed confidence renewed, peace of soul attained.

And the mother. She did not seem to mock or chide his fears, for her lovely face was anxious and alert. Yet upon it breathed a very atmosphere of unchanging tenderness and power invincible; care for the helpless, strength to shelter it from every harm. The great, calm eyes told their story, the parted lips were whispering some tale of hope, sure and immortal; the raised hand revealed whence that hope arose. All love seemed to

* This, as I ascertained afterwards, was done by thrusting a broad stone of great thickness over the apertures through which the fire rushed, and thus cutting off the air. These were worked to and fro by means of pulleys connected with iron rods.—L. H. H.

be concentrated in the brooding figure, so human, yet so celestial; all heaven seemed to lie an open path before those quivering wings. And see, the arching instep, the upward-springing foot, suggested that thither those wings were bound, bearing their God-given burden far from the horror of the earth, deep into the bosom of a changeless rest above.

The statue was only that of an affrighted child in its mother's arms: its interpretation made clear even to the dullest by the simple symbolism of some genius—Humanity rescued by the Divine.

While we gazed at its enchanting beauty, the priests and priestesses, filing away to right and left, arranged themselves alternately, first a man and then a woman, within the ring of the columns of fire that burned around the loop-shaped shrine. So great was its circumference that the whole hundred of them must stand wide apart one from another, and, to our sight, resembled little lonely children clad in gleaming garments, while their chant of worship reached us only like echoes thrown from a far precipice. In short, the effect of this holy shrine and its occupants was superb yet overwhelming—at least, I know that it filled me with a feeling akin to fear.

Oros waited till the last priest had reached his appointed place. Then he turned and said, in his gentle, reverent tones—

"Draw nigh, now, O Wanderers well-beloved, and give greeting to the Mother," and he pointed towards the statue.

"Where is she?" asked Leo, in a whisper, for here we scarcely dared to speak aloud. "I see no one."

"The Hesea dwells yonder," he answered; and taking each of us by the hand, he led us forward across the great emptiness of the apse to the altar at its head.

As we drew near, the distant chant of the priests gathered in volume, assuming a glad, triumphant note, and it seemed to me—though this, perhaps, was fancy—that the light from the twisted columns of flame grew even brighter.

At length we were there, and, Oros, loosing our hands, prostrated himself thrice before the altar. Then he rose again, and, falling behind us, stood in silence with bent head and folded fingers. We stood silent also, our hearts filled with mingled hope and fear like a cup with wine.

Were our labours ended? Had we found her whom we sought, or were we, perchance, but enmeshed in the web of some marvellous mummery, and about to make acquaintance with the secret of another new and mystical worship? For years and years we had searched, enduring every hardness of flesh and spirit that man can suffer, and now we were to learn whether we had endured in vain. Yes, and Leo would learn if the promise was to be fulfilled to him, or whether she whom he adored had become but a departed dream, to be sought for only beyond the gate of Death. Little wonder that he trembled and turned white in the agony of that great suspense.

Long, long was the time. Hours, years, ages, æons seemed to flow over us as we stood there before glittering silver curtains that hid the front of the black altar beneath the mystery of the sphinxlike face of the glorious image which was its guardian, clothed with that frozen smile of eternal love and pity. All the past went before us as we struggled in those dark waters of our doubt. Item by item, event by event, we rehearsed the story which began in the Caves of Kôr, for our thoughts, so long attuned, were open to each other and flashed from soul to soul.

Oh! now we knew they were open also to *another* soul. We could see nothing save the altar and the effigy, we could only hear the slow chant of the priests and priestesses, and the snakelike hiss of the rushing fires. Yet we knew that our hearts were as an open book to One who watched beneath the Mother's shadowing wings.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COURT OF DEATH.

Now the curtains were open. Before us appeared a chamber hollowed from the thickness of the altar, and in its centre a throne, and on the throne a figure clad in waves of billowy white flowing from the head over the arms of the throne down to its marble steps. We could see no more in the comparative darkness of that place, save that beneath the folds of the drapery the Oracle held in its hand a loop-shaped, jewelled sceptre.

Moved by some impulse, we did as Oros had done, prostrating ourselves, and there remained upon our knees. At length we heard a tinkling as of little bells, and, looking up, saw that the sistrum-shaped sceptre was stretched towards us by the draped arm which held it. Then a thin, clear voice spoke, and I thought that it trembled just a little. It spoke in Greek, but in a much purer Greek than all those people used.

"She grew white and silent as the corpse upon the bier behind her."

"I greet you, Wanderers, who have journeyed so far to visit this most ancient shrine, and although doubtless of some other faith, are not ashamed to do reverence to that unworthy one who is for this time its Oracle and the guardian of its mysteries. Rise now and have no fear of me; for have I not sent my Messenger and servants to conduct you to this Sanctuary?"

Slowly we rose, and stood silent, not knowing what to say.

"I greet you, Wanderers," the voice repeated. "Tell me thou"—and the sceptre pointed towards Leo—"how art thou named?"

"I am named Leo Vincey," he answered.

"Leo Vincey! I like the name, which to me well befits a man so goodly. And thou, the companion of—Leo Vincey?"

"I am named Horace Holly."

"So. Then tell me, Leo Vincey and Horace Holly, what came ye so far to seek?"

We looked at each other, and I said—

"The tale is long and strange, O—but by what title must we address thee?"

"By the name which I bear here—Hes."

"O Hes," I said, wondering what name she bore elsewhere.

"Yet I desire to hear that tale," she went on, and to me her voice sounded eager. "Nay, not all to-night, for I know that you both are weary; a little of it only. In sooth, Strangers, there is a sameness in this home of contemplations, and no heart can feed only on the past, if such a thing there be. Therefore I welcome a new history from the world without. Tell it me, thou, Leo, as briefly as thou wilt, so that thou tell the truth, for in the Presence of which I am a Minister may nothing else be uttered."

"Priestess," he said, in his curt fashion, "I obey. Many years ago, when I was young, my friend and foster-father and I, led by records of the past, travelled to a wild land, and there found a certain divine woman who had conquered Time."

"Then that woman must have been both aged and hideous."

"I said, Priestess, that she had conquered Time, not suffered it, for the gift of immortal youth was hers. Also, she was not hideous—she was beauty itself."

"Therefore, stranger, thou didst worship her for her beauty's sake, as a man does."

"I did not worship her; I loved her, which is another thing. The priest Oros here worships thee, whom he calls Mother. I loved that immortal woman."

"Then thou shouldst love her still. Yet, not so, since love is very mortal."

"I love her still," he answered, "although she died."

"Why, how is that? Thou saidst she was immortal."

"Perchance she only seemed to die; perchance she changed. At least, I lost her; and what I lost I seek, and have sought this many a year."

"Why dost thou seek her in my Mountain, Leo Vincey?"

"Because a vision led me to ask counsel of its Oracle. I am come hither to learn tidings of my lost love, since here alone these may be found."

"And thou, Holly, didst thou also love an immortal woman, whose immortality, it seems, must bow to Death?"

"Priestess," I answered, "I am sworn to this quest, and where my foster-son goes, I follow. He follows beauty that is dead——"

"And thou dost follow him. Therefore, both of you follow beauty, as men have ever done, being blind and mad."

"Nay," I answered, "if they were blind, beauty would be naught to them who could not see it; and if they were mad, they could not know it when it was seen. Knowledge and vision belong to the wise, O Hes."

"Thou art quick of wit and tongue, Holly, as——" and she checked herself, then of a sudden said: "Tell me, did my servant the Khania of Kaloon entertain both of you hospitably in her city, and speed you on your journey hither, as I commanded her?"

"We knew not that she was thy servant," I replied. "Hospitality we had and to spare, but we were sped from her Court hitherward by the death-hounds of the Khan, her husband. Tell us, Priestess, what thou knowest of this journey of ours."

"A little," she answered carelessly. "More than three moons ago my spies saw you upon the far mountains, and, creeping very close to you at night, heard you speak together of the object of your wanderings, then, returning thence swiftly, made report to me. Thereon I bade the Khania Atene, and that old magician her great-uncle, who is Guardian of the Gate, go down to the ancient gates of Kaloon to receive you and bring you hither with all speed. Yet for men who burned to learn the answer to a riddle, you have been long in coming."

"We came as fast as we might, O Hes," said Leo; "and if thy spies could visit those mountains, where no man was, and find a path down that hideous precipice, they must

have been able also to tell thee the reason of our delay. Therefore, I pray, ask it not of us."

"Nay, I will ask it of Atene herself, and she shall surely answer me, for she stands without," replied the Hesea in a cold voice. "Oros, lead the Khania hither, and be swift."

The priest turned and walking quickly to the wooden doors by which we had entered the shrine, vanished there.

"Now," said Leo to me nervously in the silence that followed, and speaking in English, "now I wish we were somewhere else, for I think that there will be trouble."

"I don't think—I am sure," I answered; "but the more, the better; for out of trouble may come the truth, which we need sorely." Then I stopped, reflecting that the strange woman before us said that her spies had overheard our talk upon the mountains, where we had spoken nothing but English.

As it proved, I was wise, for quite quietly the Hesea repeated after me—

"Thou hast experience, Holly, for out of trouble comes the truth, as out of wine."

Then she was silent, and, needless to say, I did not pursue the conversation.

* * * * *

The doors swung open, and through them came a procession clad in black, followed by the Shaman Simbri, who walked in front of a bier, upon which lay the body of the Khan, carried by eight priests. Behind it was Atene, draped in a black veil from head to foot, and after her marched another company of priests. In front of the altar the bier was set down, and the priests fell back, leaving Atene and her uncle standing alone before the corpse.

"What seeks my vassal, the Khania of Kaloon?" asked the Hesea in a cold voice.

Now Atene advanced and bent the knee, but with little graciousness.

"Ancient Mother, Mother from of old, I do reverence to thy holy Office, as my forefathers have done for many a generation," and again she curtsied. "Mother, this dead man asks of thee that right of sepulchre in the fires of the holy Mountain which from the beginning has been accorded to the royal departed who went before him."

"It has been accorded as thou sayest," answered the Hesea, "by those priestesses who filled my place before me, nor shall it be refused to thy dead lord—nor to thee, Atene—when thy time comes."

"I thank thee, O Hes, and I pray that this decree may be written down, for the snows of age have gathered on thy venerable head, and soon thou must leave us for awhile. Therefore bid thy scribes that it be written down, so that the Hesea who rules after thee may fulfil it in its season."

"Cease," said the Hesea, "cease to pour out thy bitterness at that which should command thy reverence, oh! thou foolish child, who dost not know but that to-morrow the fire shall claim the frail youth and beauty which are thy boast. I bid thee cease, and tell me how did death find this lord of thine?"

"Ask those wanderers yonder, that were his guests, for his blood is on their heads and cries for vengeance at thy hands."

"I killed him," said Leo, "to save my own life. He tried to hunt us down with his dogs, and there are the marks of them," and he pointed to my arm. "The priest Oros knows, for he dressed the hurts."

"How did this chance?" asked the Hesea of Atene.

"My lord was mad," she answered boldly, "and such was his cruel sport."

"So. And was thy lord jealous also? Nay, keep back the falsehood I see rising to thy lips. Leo Vincey, answer thou me. Yet—I will not ask thee to lay bare the secrets of a woman who has offered thee her love. Thou, Holly, speak, and let it be the truth."

"It is this, O Hes," I answered. "Yonder lady and her uncle, the Shaman Simbri, saved us from death in the waters of the river that bounds the precipices of Kaloon. Afterwards we were ill, and they treated us kindly, but the Khania became enamoured of my foster-son."

Here the figure of the Priestess stirred beneath its gauzy wrappings, and the Voice asked—

"And did thy foster-son become enamoured of the Khania, as, being a man, he may well have done, for without doubt she is fair?"

"He can answer that question for himself, O Hes. All I know is that he strove to escape from her, and that in the end she gave him a day to choose between death and marriage with her, when her lord should be dead. So, helped by the Khan, her husband, who was jealous of him, we fled towards this Mountain, which we desired to reach. Then the Khan set his hounds upon us, for he was mad and false-hearted. We killed him and came on in spite of this lady, his wife, and her uncle, who would have prevented us, and were met in a Place of Bones by a certain veiled guide, who led us up the Mountain and twice saved us from death. That is all the story."

"'What seeks my vassal, the Khania of Kaloon?'"

"Woman, what hast thou to say?" asked the Hesea in a menacing voice.

"But little," Atene answered without flinching. "For years I have been bound to a madman and a brute, and if my fancy wandered towards this man, and his fancy wandered towards me—well, Nature spoke to us, and that is all. Afterwards it seems that he grew afraid of the vengeance of Rassen; or this Holly, whom I would that the hounds had torn bone from bone, grew afraid. So they strove to escape the land, and perchance wandered to thy Mountain. But I weary of this talk, and ask thy leave to rest before to-morrow's rite."

"Thou sayest, Atene," said the Hesea, "that Nature spoke to this man and to thee, and that his heart is thine; but that, fearing thy lord's vengeance, he fled from thee, he who seems no coward. Tell me, then, is that tress he hides in the satchel on his breast thy gage of love to him?"

"I know nothing of what he hides in the satchel," answered the Khania sullenly.

"And yet, yonder in the Gatehouse, when he lay so sick, he set the lock against thine own—ah! dost remember now?"

"So, O Hes, already he has told thee all our secrets, though they be such as most men hide within their breasts"; and she looked contemptuously at Leo.

"I told her nothing of the matter, Khania," Leo said in an angry voice.

"Nay, *thou* toldest me nothing; Wanderer, my watching spirit told me. Oh, didst thou think, Atene, that thou couldst hide the truth from the all-seeing Hesea of the Mountain? If so, spare thy breath, for I know all, and have known it from the first. I passed thy disobedience by; of thy false messages I took no heed. For my own purposes I, to whom time is naught, suffered even that thou shouldst hold these, my guests, thy prisoners, whilst thou didst strive by threats and force to win a love denied."

She paused, then went on coldly: "Woman, I tell thee that, to complete thy sin, thou hast even dared to lie to me here, in my very Sanctuary."

"If so, what of it?" was the bold answer. "Dost thou love the man thyself? Nay, it is monstrous! Nature would cry aloud at such a shame. Oh! tremble not with rage. Hes, I know thy evil powers, but I know also that I am thy guest, and that in this hallowed place, beneath yonder symbol of eternal Love, thou mayst shed no blood. More, thou canst not harm me, Hes, who am thy equal."

"Atene," replied the measured Voice, "did I desire it, I could destroy thee where thou art. Yet thou art right, I shall not harm thee, thou faithless servant. Did not my writ bid thee through yonder searcher of the stars, thy uncle, to meet these guests of mine and bring them straight to my shrine? Tell me, for I seek to know, how comes it that thou didst disobey me?"

"Have, then, thy desire," answered Atene in a new and earnest voice, devoid now of bitterness and falsehood. "I disobeyed because that man is not thine, but mine, and no other woman's; because I love him and have loved him from of old. Aye, since first our souls sprang into life I have loved him, as he has loved me. My own heart tells me so; the magic of my uncle here tells me so, though how and where and when these things have been I know not. Therefore, I come to thee, Mother of Mysteries, Guardian of the secrets of the past, to learn the truth. At least, thou canst not lie at thine own altar, and I charge thee by the dread name of that Power to which thou also must render thy account, that thou answer now and here.

"Who is this man to whom my being yearns? What has he been to me? What has he to do with thee? Speak, O Oracle, and make the secret clear. Speak, I command, even if afterwards thou dost slay me—if thou canst."

"Aye, speak! speak!" said Leo, "for know I am in sore suspense. I also am bewildered by memories and rent with hopes and fears."

And I, too, echoed: "Speak!"

"Leo Vincey," asked the Hesea, after she had thought awhile, "whom dost thou believe me to be?"

"I believe," he answered solemnly, "that thou art that Ayesha at whose hands I died of old in the Caves of Kôr in Africa. I believe thou art that Ayesha whom not twenty years ago I found and loved in those same Caves of Kôr, and there saw perish miserably, swearing that thou wouldst return again."

"See, now, how madness can mislead a man!" broke in Atene triumphantly. "'Not twenty years ago,' he said, whereas I know well that more than eighty summers have gone by since my grandsire in his youth saw this same priestess sitting on the Mother's throne."

"And whom dost thou believe me to be, O Holly?" the Priestess asked, taking no note of the Khania's words.

"What he believes, I believe," I answered.

"'Let the books be opened!'"

"The dead come back to life—sometimes. Yet alone thou knowest the truth, and by thee only it can be revealed."

"Aye," she said, as though musing, "the dead come back to life—sometimes—and in strange shape, and mayhap I know the truth. To-morrow, when yonder body is borne on high for burial, we will speak of it again. Till then rest you all, and prepare to face that fearful thing—the Truth."

While the Hesea still spoke, the silvery

curtains swung to their place as mysteriously as they had opened. Then, as though at some signal, the black-robed priests advanced. Surrounding Atene, they led her from the Sanctuary, accompanied by her uncle the Shaman, who, as it seemed to me, either through fatigue or fear, could scarcely stand upon his feet, but stood blinking his dim eyes as though the light dazed him. When these were gone, the priests and priestesses, who all this time had been ranged round the walls, far out of hearing of our talk, gathered themselves into their separate companies, and, still chanting, departed also, leaving us alone with Oros and the corpse of the Khan, which remained where it had been set down.

Now the head priest Oros beckoned to us to follow him, and we went also. Nor was I sorry to leave the place, for its deathlike loneliness—enhanced, strangely enough, as it was, by the flood of light that filled it; a loneliness which was concentrated and expressed in the awful figure stretched upon the bier—oppressed and overcame us, whose nerves were broken by all that we had undergone. Thankful enough was I when, having passed the transepts and down the length of the vast nave, we came to the iron doors, the rock passage, and the outer gates, which, as before, opened to let us through, and so at last into the sweet, cold air of the night at that hour which precedes the dawn.

Oros led us to a house well-built and furnished, where at his bidding, like men in a dream, we drank of some liquor which he gave us. I think that drink was drugged; at least, after swallowing it, I remembered no more till I awoke to find myself lying on a bed and feeling wonderfully strong and well. This I thought strange, for a lamp burning in the room showed me that it was still dark and, therefore, that I could have rested but a little time.

I tried to sleep again, but was not able, so fell to thinking till I grew weary of the task. For here thoughts would not help me; nothing could help, except the truth, "that fearful thing," as the veiled Priestess had called it.

Oh! what if she proved not the Ayesha whom we desired, but some "fearful thing"? What was the meaning of the Khania's hints and of her boldness, that surely had been inspired by the strength of a hidden knowledge? What if—nay, it could not be—I would rise and dress my arm. Or I would wake Leo and make him dress it—anything to occupy my mind until the appointed hour, when we must learn—the best—or the worst.

I sat up in bed and saw a figure advancing towards me. It was Oros, who bore a lamp in his hand.

"You have slept long, friend Holly," he said, "and now it is time to be up and doing."

"Long?" I answered testily. "How can that be, when it is still dark?"

"Because, friend, the dark is that of a new night. Many hours have gone by since you lay down upon this bed. Well, you were wise to rest you while you may, for who knows when you will sleep again? Come, let me bathe your arm."

"Tell me——" I broke in.

"Nay, friend," he interrupted firmly, "I will tell you nothing, except that soon you must start to be present at the funeral of the Khan and, perchance, to learn the answer to your questions."

Ten minutes later he led me to the eating-chamber of the house, where I found Leo already dressed, for Oros had awakened him before he came to me and bidden him to prepare himself. Oros told us here that the Hesea had not suffered us to be disturbed until the night came again, since we had much to undergo that day. So presently we started.

Once more we were led through the flame-lit hall till we came to the loop-shaped apse. The place was empty now, even the corpse of the Khan had gone, and no draped Oracle sat in the altar shrine, for its silver curtains were drawn, and we saw that it was untenanted.

"The Mother has departed to do honour to the dead, according to the ancient custom," Oros explained to us.

Then we passed the altar, and behind the statue found a door in the rock wall of the apse, and beyond the door a passage, and a hall as of a house, for out of it opened other doors leading to chambers. These, our guide told us, were the dwelling-places of the Hesea and her maidens. He added that they ran to the side of the Mountain and had windows that opened on to gardens and let in the light and air. In this hall six priests were waiting, each of whom carried a bundle of torches beneath his arm and held in his hand a lighted lamp.

"Now our road runs through the dark," said Oros; "though were it day, we might climb the outer snows, but this at night it is dangerous to do."

Then taking torches, he lit them at a lamp and gave one to each of us.

Now our climb began. Up endless sloping galleries we went, hewn with inconceivable labour by the primeval fire-worshippers from the living rock of the Mountain. It seemed to me that they stretched for miles, and indeed this was so, since, although the slope was always gentle, it took us more than an hour to climb them. At length we came to the foot of a great stair.

"Rest awhile here, my lord," Oros said, bowing to Leo with the reverence that he had shown him from the first, "for this stair is steep and long. Now we stand upon the Mountain's topmost lip, and are about to climb that tall, looped column which soars above."

So we sat down in the vaultlike place and let the sharp draught of air rushing to and from the passages play upon us, for we were heated with journeying up those close galleries. As we sat thus, I heard a roaring sound, and asked Oros what it might be. He answered that we were very near to the crater of the volcano, and that what we heard through the thickness of the rock was the rushing of its everlasting fires. Then the ascent commenced.

It was not dangerous, though very wearisome, for there were nearly six hundred of those steps. The climb of the passages had reminded me of that of the gallery of the Great Pyramid drawn out for whole furlongs; that of the pillar was like the ascent of a cathedral spire—or, rather, of several spires piled one upon another.

Resting from time to time, we dragged ourselves up the steep steps, each of them quite a foot in height, till the pillar was climbed and only the loop remained. Up it we went also, Oros leading us, and glad was I that the stairway still ran within the substance of the rock, for I could feel the needle's mighty eye quiver in the rush of the winds which swept about its sides.

At length we saw light before us, and in another twenty steps emerged upon a platform. As Leo, who went in front of me, walked from the stairway, I saw Oros and another priest seize him by the arms, and called to him to ask what they were doing.

"Nothing," he cried back, "except that this is a dizzy place, and they feared lest I should fall. Mind how you come, Horace!" and he stretched out his hand to me.

Now I was clear of the tunnel, and I believe that had it not been for that hand I should have sunk to the rocky floor, for the sight before me seemed to paralyse my brain. Nor was this to be wondered at, for I doubt whether the world can show such another.

We stood upon the very apex of the loop, a flat space of rock about eighty yards in length by some thirty in breadth, with the star-strewn sky above us. To the south, twenty thousand feet or more below, stretched the dim Plain of Kaloon, and to the east and west the snow-clad shoulders of the Peak and the broad, brown slopes beneath. To the north was a different sight, and one more awsome. There, right under us, as it seemed—for the pillar bent inwards—lay the vast crater of the volcano, and in the centre of it a wide lake of fire that broke into bubbles and flowers of sudden flame, or spouted, writhed, and twisted like an angry sea.

From the surface of this lake rose smoke and gases that took fire as they floated upwards and, mingling together, formed a gigantic sheet of living light. Right opposite to us burned this sheet, and the flare of it, passing through the needle-eye of the pillar under us, sped away in one dazzling beam across the country of Kaloon, across the mountains beyond, till it was lost on the horizon.

The wind blew from south to north, being sucked in towards the hot crater of the volcano; and its fierce breath, that screamed through the eye of the pillar and against its rugged surface, bent the long crest of the sheet of flame as an ocean roller is bent over by the gale, and tore from it fragments of fire, that floated away to leeward like the blown-out sails of a burning ship.

Had it not been for this strong and steady wind, indeed, no creature could have lived upon the pillar, for the vapours would have poisoned him; but its unceasing blast drove these all away towards the north. For the same reason, in the thin air of that icy place the heat was not too great to be endured.

Appalled by that terrific spectacle, which seemed more appropriate to the terrors of the Pit than to this earth of ours, and fearful lest the blast should whirl me like a dead leaf into the glowing gulf beneath, I fell on to my sound hand and my knees, shouting to Leo to do likewise, and looked about me. Now I observed lines of priests wrapped in great capes, kneeling upon the face of the rock and engaged apparently in prayer; but of Hes the Mother, or of Atene, or of the corpse of the dead Khan, I could see nothing.

Whilst I wondered where they might be, Oros, upon whose nerves this dread scene appeared to have no effect, and some of our attendant priests surrounded us and led us onwards by a path that ran perilously near

to the rounded edge of the rock. A few downward steps and we found that we were under shelter, for the gale was roaring over us. Twenty more paces and we came to a recess cut, I suppose, by man in the face of the loop, in such fashion that a lava roof was left projecting half across its width.

This recess, or rock chamber, which was large enough to shelter a great number of people, we reached safely, to discover that it was already tenanted. Seated in a chair hewn from the rock was the Hesea, wearing a broidered, purple mantle above her gauzy wrappings that enveloped her from head to foot. There, too, standing near to her, were the Khania Atene and her uncle, the old Shaman, who looked but ill at ease; and lastly, stretched upon his funeral couch, the fiery light beating upon his stark form and face, lay the dead Khan Rassen.

We advanced to the throne and bowed to her who sat thereon. The Hesea lifted her hooded head, which seemed to have been sunk upon her breast as though she were overcome by thought or care, and addressed Oros the priest. For in the shelter of those massive walls by comparison there was silence, and folk could hear each other speak.

"So thou hast brought them safely, my servant," she said; "and I am glad, for to those that know it not this road is fearful. My guests, what say you of the burying-pit of the Children of Hes?"

"Our faith tells us of a hell, lady," answered Leo, "and I think that yonder cauldron looks like its mouth."

"Nay," she answered, "there is no hell, save that which from life to life we fashion for ourselves within the circle of this little star. Leo Vincey, I tell thee that hell is here—aye, *here!*" and she struck her hand upon her breast, while once more her head drooped forward as though bowed down beneath some load of secret misery.

Thus she stayed awhile, then lifted it and spoke again, saying—

"Midnight is past, and much must be done and suffered before the dawn. Aye, the darkness must be turned to light, or perchance the light to eternal darkness.

"Royal woman," she went on, addressing Atene, "as is his right, thou hast brought thy dead lord hither for burial in this consecrated place, where the ashes of all who went before him have become fuel for the holy fires. Oros, my priest, summon thou the Accuser and him who makes defence, and let the books be opened, that I may pass my judgment on the dead, and call his soul to live again, or pray that from it the breath of life may be withheld.

"Priest, I say the Court of Death is open!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE SECOND ORDEAL.

Oros bowed and left the place, whereon the Hesea signed to us to stand upon her right, and to Atene to stand upon her left. Presently from either side the hooded priests and priestesses stole into the chamber, and to the number of fifty or more ranged themselves along its walls. Then came two figures draped in black and masked, who bore parchment books in their hands, and placed themselves on either side of the corpse, while Oros stood at its feet, facing the Hesea.

Now she lifted the sistrum that she held, and, in obedience to the signal, Oros said—

"Let the books be opened!"

Thereon the masked Accuser to the right broke the seal of his book and began to read its pages. It was a tale of the sins of this dead man, entered as fully as though that officer were his own conscience given life and voice. In cold and horrible detail it told of the evil doings of his childhood, of his youth, and of his riper years; and thus massed together, the record was black indeed.

I listened amazed, wondering what spy had been set upon the deeds of yonder man throughout his days; thinking also with a shudder of how heavy would be the tale against any one of us, if such a spy should companion him from the cradle to the grave; remembering, too, that full surely this count is kept by scribes even more watchful than the ministers of Hes.

At length the story drew to its close. Lastly it told of the murder of that noble upon the banks of the river; it told of the plot against our lives for no just cause; it told of our cruel hunting with the death-hounds, and of its end. Then the Accuser shut his book and cast it on the ground, saying—

"Such is the record, O Mother. Sum it up as thou hast been given wisdom."

Without speaking, the Hesea pointed with her sistrum to the Defender, who thereon broke the seal of his book and began to read.

Its tale spoke of all the good that the dead man had done; of every noble word that he had said, of every kind action; of plans which he had made for the welfare of his vassals; of temptations to ill that he had resisted; of the true love that he had borne to the

"Hurled it feet foremost into the fiery lake below."

woman who became his wife; of the prayers which he had made and of the offerings which he had sent to the temple of Hes.

Making no mention of her name, it told of how that wife of his had hated him, of how she and the magician, who had fostered and educated her, and was her relative and guide, had set other women to lead him astray, that she might be free of him. Of how also they had driven him mad with a poisonous drink which took away his judgment, unchained all the evil in his heart, and caused him by its baneful influence to shrink unnaturally from her whose love he still desired.

Also it set out that the heaviest of his crimes were inspired by this wife of his, who sought to befoul his name in the ears of the people whom she led him to oppress, and how bitter jealousy drove him to cruel acts, the last and worst of which caused him foully to violate the law of hospitality, and in attempting to bring about the death of blameless guests, at their hands to find his own.

Thus the Defender read, and having read, closed the book and threw it on the ground, saying—

"Such is the record, O Mother. Sum it up as thou hast been given wisdom."

Then the Khania, who all this time had stood cold and impassive, stepped forward to speak, and with her, her uncle, the Shaman Simbri. But before a word passed Atene's lips, the Hesea raised her sceptre and forbade, saying—

"Thy day of trial is not yet, nor have we aught to do with thee. When thou liest where he lies, and the books of thy deeds are read aloud to her who sits in judgment, then let thine advocate make answer for these things."

"So be it," answered Atene haughtily, and fell back.

Now it was the turn of the high-priest Oros. "Mother," he said, "thou hast heard. Balance the writings, assess the truth, and according to thy wisdom issue thy commands. Shall we hurl him who was Rassen feet first into the fiery gulf, that he may walk again in the paths of life, or head first, in token that he is dead indeed?"

Then, while all waited in hushed expectancy, the great Priestess delivered her verdict.

"I hear, I balance, I assess, but judge I do not, who claim no such power. Let the Spirit who sent him forth, to whom he is returned again, pass judgment on his spirit. This dead one has sinned deeply, yet has he been more deeply sinned against. Nor against that man can be reckoned the account of his deeds of madness. Cast him then to his grave feet first, that his name may be whitened in the ears of those unborn, and that thence he may return again at the time appointed. It is spoken."

Now the Accuser lifted the book of his accusations from the ground and, advancing, hurled it into the gulf, in token that it was blotted out. Then he turned and vanished from the chamber; while the Advocate, taking his book, gave it into the keeping of the priest Oros, that it might be preserved in the archives of the temple for ever. This done, the priests set up a funeral chant and a solemn invocation to the great Lord of the Under-world that he would receive this spirit and acquit it there as here it had been acquitted by the Hesea, his minister.

Ere their dirge ended, certain of the priests, advancing with slow steps, lifted the bier and carried it to the edge of the gulf; then, at a sign from the Mother, hurled it feet foremost into the fiery lake below, whilst all watched to see how it struck the flame. For this they held to be an omen, since should the body turn over in its descent, it was taken as a sign that the judgment of mortal men had been refused in the Place of the Immortals.

It did not turn; it rushed downwards straight as a plummet and plunged into the fire hundreds of feet below, and there for ever vanished. This, indeed, was not strange, since, as we discovered afterwards, the feet were weighted.

In fact, this solemn rite was but a formula that, down to the exact words of judgment and committal, had been practised here from unknown antiquity over the bodies of the priests and priestesses of the Mountain, and of certain of the great ones of the Plain. So it was in ancient Egypt, whence without doubt this ceremony of the trial of the dead was derived, and so it continued to be in the land of Hes, for no priestess ever ventured to condemn the soul of one departed.

* * * * *

The service, if I may call it so, was finished; the dead man had followed the record of his sins into that lurid sea of fire, and by now was but a handful of charred dust. But if his book had closed, ours remained open and at its strangest chapter. We knew it, all of us, and waited, our nerves thrilled with expectancy.

(*To be continued.*)

"GANGS OF PEASANTS DRAWING GOVERNMENT PAY, SO THAT EACH FAMINE REINFORCES THE LAND AGAINST THE NEXT WHICH IS TO COME."

Men, women, and children breaking stones at Relief Works.

THE MONSOON AND THE INDIAN PEASANT.

BY THE LATE SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., ETC.

AS I open the newspaper, my eye is caught by a telegram which comes from India. The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, cables to our Indian Secretary of State these words—

"Monsoon has commenced on Bombay coast. There has been light rain in Deccan and Central Provinces; useful rain has fallen in Upper India."

Here is a message of supreme imperial moment for three hundred million human beings, as well as to those who govern them. They belong to each other as shadow does to light, or the glove to the hand, or the shoe to the foot. Many Americans may reasonably inquire why the Viceroy should make a State business out of a shower of rain. The answer to this is well worth giving.

It must be first understood that India depends upon the Indian Ocean quite as closely as Egypt on her Nile. The yearly inundations of that river create the crops of the Egyptians, and there are also two meteorological events upon which the question of sufficient food for the Indian people always turns. These are the two monsoons. One of them, blowing from October to April, is all-important to the eastern side of the peninsula; the other and more valuable one feeds the western side and much of the great central tableland.

Into the physical causes of the monsoons we need not here inquire; the Hindu peasant is contented by ascribing them to Indra, the God of the Sky. But what happens is this. During the month of May the lowlands and plains of India gradually dry up, till you would scarcely believe that the parched soil would ever yield another harvest. The leaves have fallen from all deciduous trees; the *nullahs*, or watercourses, are full of dried-up bushes and burning sands, dotted here and there with the footprints of wild animals painfully seeking for water. The rich, black soil of the Deccan cracks with innumerable fissures, among which your horse may easily plunge and break his leg, and into which the grey and green lizards dive madly at your approach.

Where any water has been preserved in well or tank, the trickle of it laces the land with ribands of green, and even the tiger goes gingerly on his soft, pink pads over that now burning earth. Along the roof-ridge the black and grey crows sit with open beaks, and charitable shopkeepers fit up in front of their stalls a bowl and bamboo pipe, wherefrom the thirsty low castes may drink, without polluting by their lips the household vessels.

Close, windless nights bring no relief from glowing, pitiless days; and as June begins, all eyes and thoughts will be turned to the bank of dark clouds constantly gathering along the western horizon. Those are the *Meghaduta*, "the cloud messengers" of the gods

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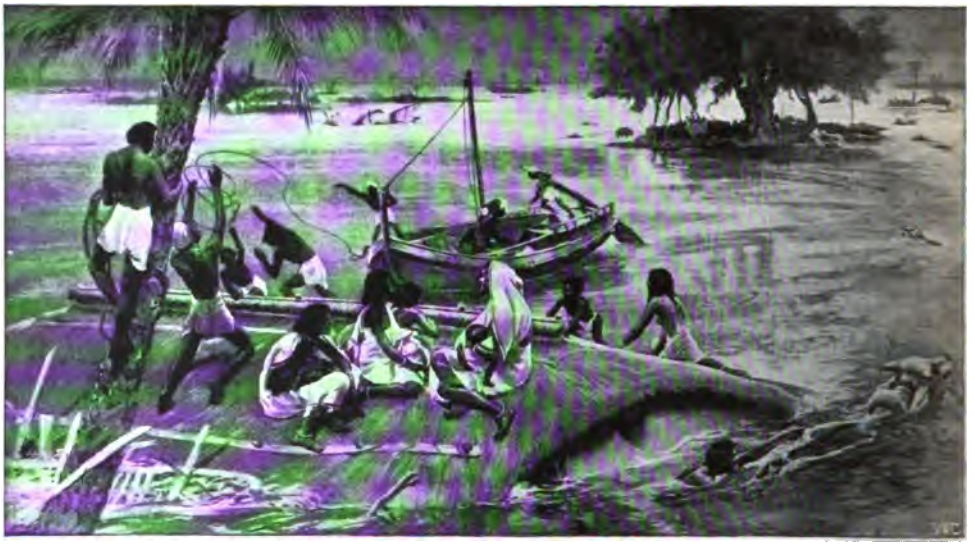
of sea and sky; and in their black, gigantic folds lie the fates of millions of living people. There has been stored up through many a blazing day water enough from the surface of the ocean to fill a thousand great rivers, provided only that Indra directs their course rightly, and that they bestow their blessing where it is most needed.

Higher and higher in the western sky the dark clouds rise, until they overspread it, and the sun itself becomes obscure. Then follows the *Burra-choop* — the "mighty silence," when the earth herself seems to listen together with all her living creatures to what the gods are silently preparing in the upper regions. You would indeed say that Heaven's artillery as seems to frighten the sea into calm and to shake the hills to their roots.

It means that the south-west monsoon has broken; that the clouds, with their precious freight of moisture lifted up from the ocean have begun to unload in their appointed region—that is to say, all along the brows of the western Ghâts. In a thousand spots throughout those flat-topped mountains and those boundless, hanging forests, the burned-up rivers and sun-baked *nullahs*, where yesterday the snake could not find one drop to cool its forked tongue, impetuous torrents are running; the streets are swamps, into which every house-roof pours its small catar-



RESCUING THE INHABITANTS OF A SUBMERGED VILLAGE.
From a drawing by William Small.

the Planet pressed finger to lip, and hollowed out her hand behind her ear to catch the patter of the first drop of the rainfall. The Greeks had a special name for this, the word *psekas*; you will find it in Æschylus.

But long before those first large raindrops spatter the streets and set the earliest frogs croaking, the lamps of the lightning and the drums of the thunder usher in a vast elemental spectacle. The dense canopy overhead does not merely open, but seems rather to split asunder in many places at once; and through these huge crevices you do not see the natural blue of the sky, but the lurid gold of an atmosphere on fire, from which dart forth javelins of livid flame, which flash and crackle and fly with barbed heads of burning splendour to such an accompaniment of acts, upon the volume and force of which the happy people, squatting in their verandahs, make gambling bets with cowries.

In the gardens the rain sweeps through tree-tops and thirsty milk-bushes like a storm of shot, sometimes coming apparently in sheets rather than drops.

The monsoon has burst! There will be food for all, *dal*, rice, wheat, *bâjri*, and *jowari*, and cotton, and jute, and opium to sell; and *gram*, and sugar-cane for the horses and elephants. *Chupattis* (cakes of meal) shall brown upon the griddle, and hot *conjee* shall smoke in the *lotas*. The terror of the Famine shall this year depart from the land, if only day by day the clouds pour forth the same sparkling wealth.

Meanwhile, near and far, from the face of

the land a fragrance goes up, stronger and more intoxicating, yet at the same time subtler, than any emanating from flowers. It is the perfume of the kiss which the sky is giving to the earth, and all men draw the delightful waft into mouths and nostrils, for the gods have not ceased to love and preserve India, and this is the savour of the friendship between Heaven and Earth.

And now what is he for whose sake the earth and the sky have been engaged in such a beneficent conspiracy? He is the Indian peasant, to understand whom will be to complete our picture of the Indian monsoon.

First of all, it must be observed that India is pre-eminently a land of villages, and therefore of agriculture. There are few towns and very few cities within her wide confines. When mention has been made of the three imperial sisters, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, and when a score or so of provincial centres have also been enumerated, such as Kurachi and Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, and Allahabad, with the chief seats of native rule like Jeypore and Baroda, Gwalior and Hyderabad, with some few great stations like Poona, Bangalore, and Jubbulpore, the map will contain besides these no such large townships or manufacturing centres as would abound in other countries so densely peopled.

But as to the villages, they swarm from north to south and from east to west. These are all more or less one type, and very much of one size, the population never greatly increasing in them nor ever greatly diminishing, except when Famine decimates a region, or where in jungle districts a man-eating tiger sometimes takes possession of the place.

WOMEN AT WORK ON A "RELIEF CAMP."

BONES OF CATTLE STARVED BY A LONG DROUGHT.

Most of the villages are surrounded with a wall and towers built of sun-dried mud, the main gateway having above it a fighting platform to command the approach to the massive timber door studded with elephant-spikes, relics of a time when armed robbers rode in the land. Now the grey, crumbling walls serve the good purpose of keeping out wild beasts and stray marauders and herding the cattle safely.

Inside the mud rampart there will generally be found but one main street, quite innocent naturally of pavement or any pretension to architecture. A simple row of mud and wattle huts stands in democratic similitude on either side of the dusty street. This will open about the middle of its course upon an equally dusty square or *plaza*, in the centre

of which is pretty sure to stand a large tree—a peepul or a banyan—and under its shade the village councils are held and the evening "hubble-bubbles" are smoked.

Near to the tree will be seen a bamboo pole bearing a dust-coloured banner with the badge or sign of the village deity, to whose glory and worship the little temple with its stone steps and open platform of masonry has been erected on one side of the open space. In front of almost every hut will be noticed the tulsi-plant growing in a *jardinière* built of mud and whitewashed. This small shrub is very sacred and represents the wife of Shiva. Every morning the earliest care of the Hindu housemother will be to stencil new ornaments in red ochre upon the tulsi-pot, and to give water to it, that Lakshmi, the Goddess of Good Luck, may be propitious.

In the evening, if it be hot weather, the male population of the village sleeps along the face of the huts under the tulsi-pots on *charpoys*, the native bedsteads, which the carpenter makes with eight pennyworth of teak and cocoanut fibre in this land of simplicities.

I used to enjoy the placid nights passed in many such a village when I rode in from hunting, the ponderous bars of the gate having been drawn back for me, the sleepers in the roadway unwinding their headcloths to see who came to rest in the temple, while the village dogs yelped a dubious welcome, and the surly buffaloes grunted as we disturbed their cud-chewing in the warm dust. A Hindu in travelling is content if he can wrap a cotton cloth round his head and neck; the rest of his body takes care of itself.

These grey, mud villages, with *chuppur* or roof of leaves and branches, and smell of cow-dung fires and spiced jungle dust, have circular daubs like brown pancakes stuck all over the outer house-walls. That is the fuel of the country. All cattle-droppings are carefully collected, mixed up with short straw and dead leaves, and left to dry into these strange cakes, which make excellent fires; and though ignorant critics have foolishly blamed the Indian peasant for thus burning his best and indeed only manure, Govind and Luximan know better. The ashes still hold all that the soil wants; nothing has been lost, although it is experience, not chemistry, which has taught them this rural lore.

The village constitution is almost identical throughout the land, and of immense antiquity. Every village has its established officers, from the *Patel*, who is its head, to the Astrologer, who must be a Brahmin; to the village barber, the village *shikari*, the blacksmith, or *Lohar*, the accountant and money-lender, down to the low-caste men, who skin dead cattle and carry defunct villagers to be burned by the riverside. These functions commonly descend in the same family, and such as you behold an Indian village to-day, so did it look, and so did it live probably, "when Alexander passed the Indus with his Macedonian numbers."

From these officials and from the elders of the community is drawn a body called the *Panchayet*, which transacts all the affairs of

A STREET FLOODED BY THE MONSOON.

the village, and even acts sometimes as a simple court of justice. It should consist of five members, as its name implies, but the numerical restriction is not rigid.

For all these quiet people, official and non-official, there is but one great interest—the land, and one great industry—the tilling of it. Think what that means, when the lowest estimate at which could be set the peasant householders of India would be thirty-five millions. For all this immense class, with the wives and children appertaining, those rain-bringing clouds of the monsoon are envoys of life or death.

HIS MAJESTY'S MAILS WRECKED BY A MONSOON FLOOD.

If the rainfall during June, July, and August be normal and sufficient, India will amply provide food for her children. The earth will be everywhere soaked and softened for the ploughing and sowing, and will render to the cultivator at least two crops in the year. And although their agricultural implements be of the most primitive make, these peasants understand their work well, using only oxen and toiling hard from sunrise to sunset all the months through, except during the burning silences of May and the heavy downfall of the following two or three months.

Each village tills and reaps the tract of arable land adjoining its walls, the Government taking a certain fixed percentage, sometimes from the *zamindar*, or local landlord, sometimes from the head of the community. Occasionally, no doubt, there is a hard struggle to make two ends meet. But the capacity of every field is well known and registered: the assessments are regular, and often lightened when circumstances are bad; and I should, perhaps, call the ryot's life in India one of the happiest led by men, if he could keep out of debt.

The climate for the most part is bright, serene, and joy-giving. The ryot lives in the face of Nature, on simple diet easily procured, and inherits a philosophy which, without literary culture, lifts his spirit into a higher plane of thought than other peasantries know of. Abstinence from flesh food of any kind not only gives him a pure blood exempt from civilised diseases, but makes him the friend and not the enemy of the animal world around; so that the birds and beasts have good relations with him and gladly make a home wherever he dwells.

It is strange for an Englishman to see the wild doves of the jungle so fearlessly haunting these wells and tanks, the striped squirrels racing over each doorstep, the monkeys chattering upon the roof ridge, and the paroquets, with their laced collars of purple and rose colour, screaming up and down the village street in a cloud of flashing green. The peasant even lives familiarly with the snakes and the jackals, and has no quarrel with the tiger if that jungle-tyrant leaves the women and children alone and does not carry off too many cows.

He never doubts that he has passed through many lives before this one, and will inhabit many a new body; while the bond of relationship is so strong that everyone finds some kinsman to help him at need, and there is no Poor Law in India and no necessity for any. What ruins him and is at the same time almost absolutely necessary, is debt and the moneylender.

There are certain incidents in his existence which demand from him, by immemorial

custom, a lavish expenditure, such as the marriage of a son or daughter. On these occasions he gets into the fatal books of the *marwarrie*, who finds him the capital needed on the security of his fields and crops. The rate of interest is high, and the Courts all work for the benefit of the usurer, so that too often he has gone eventually out of his depth and become a mere paid labourer on the lands which he used to call his own.

Many remedies have been tried by the Government to abate this evil, such as the establishment of agricultural banks, the limitation of rates of interest, and, above all, by a system of schemes of irrigation, for water is ever the real wealth of India. But, speaking generally, the moneylender, at times so useful, constitutes some day or other a terror for the ryot greater than famine, greater than the man-eating tiger, greater than the Revenue collector; and thus it has been that in days of rebellion the Indian peasant, if he rises at all, first takes the life of the local *marwarrie* and burns his books, retiring again, after these illegal but economical steps, to the quiet scratching of the earth with the crooked log he calls a plough.

From time immemorial an Indian government, of whatever kind, has always acted as the owner of the soil. The land belonged to its enthroned lord, who took every year a fixed portion of the crops gathered from it by the cultivators, leaving the rest to them. The new system of farming out the taxes to some middleman or agency came in with the Moguls. They found a convenient machinery already existing for such a purpose in the *Zamindar*, who was the foremost and richest man in the community. From him the Mogul rulers exacted a certain revenue—no longer in kind, but in value—and then made over the district under tribute to this personage, leaving him practically to do as he pleased with the soil and those who tilled it.

The British Raj, while inheriting from its Mohammedan predecessors most of the machinery and all the technical names and terms of the system, have proved themselves much kinder landlords than were Akhbar the Great and Aurangzebe. The burden on the peasant is to-day comparatively light, and he might keep his own fields in one family line century after century as he would wish, were it not for the social customs which force him into occasional prodigality.

For example, as has been said, he must be magnificently lavish at the marriage of a child. The honour of his name depends upon large feasts of cakes and fruits and sticky sweetmeats to the neighbours, with liberal presents to the priests of the village and surrounding country. Accordingly he borrows from the *Mahajun*, borrows recklessly, desperately, fatally; and once in the books of that convenient but merciless friend, it needs only a bad harvest or two to render him bankrupt.

What may, perhaps, save him, and often—indeed, does save him—is that same black phalanx of cloud which I have described as rolling over the Indian Ocean every June, to strike in fertilising tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain on the ramparts of the Western Ghâts. Then it will be Indra who pays for everything, Government collector, wedding festivities, moneylenders, and all. Sometimes that Lord of Elements gives with both hands full, and then the dark red soil of the Deccan shows itself as generous as the mud of the Nile.

The British in India have dared to challenge the decrees of the Hindu Olympus. At each epoch when famine threatens, a vast machinery of despotic beneficence starts into action; in every menaced district public works on an immense scale are set afoot; camps are pitched where day by day food is served out to scores of thousands of starving folk, and the Indian Chancellor of the Exchequer grits his official teeth and nerves himself with a splendid recklessness to fling his surplus to the winds and to spend countless *lakhs* to keep down the death-rates and to carry India over the days of dear rice and millet. The impossible is frankly accepted as possible, and Simla deliberately challenges the offended gods.

Railways and roads, dams and reservoirs, canals and storage-weirs are put under construction by gangs of peasants drawing Government pay, so that each famine reinforces the land against the next which is to come.

In any but the very worst years, India can always feed herself with her own harvests; for the drought is generally local, and nowadays the means of communication are so much developed that food-grains can be distributed from the lucky to the unlucky regions with a promptitude undreamed of in the days of the Great Mutiny. But a really wet day in June is worth more to India than can well be counted in rupees; and therefore it is that the Viceroy sends no message home to Whitehall more pleasant to himself and more gladdening to the Secretary of State than the news that "The monsoon has broken well."

IF YOUTH BUT KNEW.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

VI.—THE HOMING BIRD.

IT was afternoon in Cassel, the capital of King Jerome's patchwork kingdom of Westphalia.

They stood facing each other in the half tawdry-French, half dowdy-German sitting-room. All inn-chambers have, no doubt, seen in their day much of the comedy, much of the tragedy of life; but the walls of the "Aigle Impérial" could scarce have held a stress of deeper passion than that which moved the two young lives, sport of perverse Fate, this day.

These two, who had married for love, but whom a woman's petty spite had succeeded in parting within an hour of their bridal, had met again; irresistibly yearning to each other, they were destined to be once more betrayed, this time by the very depth of their own feelings. Had they but avoided explanation! One touch of trembling hand on trembling hand, and all would have been said and all understood. But, alas! the fatal gift of speech has estranged more honest souls seeking each other than ever years of silence!

Count Steven Lee, of Waldorf-Kilmansegg, had come riding in great haste into the inn courtyard to seek his truant bride, and his heart was beating high with a love at once tender and ardent. But the first sight of Sidonia's face, marble white and set, seemed to freeze in his veins the warm tide that was rushing all to her. Yet, poor child, it was the very clamour of her own joy that made her steel herself to outward coldness, till she had measured him by his greeting, till she knew for certain if she dare be happy.

Thus they stood. Sidonia averted her eyes. She thought his arms would quickly enfold her once again. Her whole being swooned towards that moment. Nothing came to her, nothing held her, but an ever-increasing sense of chill, of desolation. The distant drum-beats and clarions of King Jerome's troops, marching to parade, the twitter of the birds in the courtyard, the coarse laughter of the grooms, floated in through the open window. She turned upon her husband of an hour with fierce inquiry: "What brings you here?" she cried.

The glow of expectancy had fallen quickly from Steven. His haughty English blood, his English traditions could ill brook challenge from one whose charm should have been womanliness, whose duty was submission. Enough of the Austrian had he in him, too, to take umbrage more quickly than the whole-born Briton. His tone was harsh as he made answer—

"Because it is time this folly should cease. Because you are my wife. Because you bear my name. Because your honour is mine. I will not have you running about the world—and in such a place as this, good Heavens!—under no better guard than that of Burgravine Betty."

The colour came and went in Sidonia's cheek. As the accent of contempt with which he pronounced her aunt's name smote her ear, she started, eyes afire.

"By all accounts," retorted she, striving to steady her voice, which throbbed to the beating of her heart, "you had been willing to trust Aunt Betty with your own honour. . . . . Is it generous to speak of her like this?"

"Generous!" he echoed. Anger was now fairly upon him. "Will you teach me generosity, you who drove me away with insult, without giving me a chance to explain?—you, my bride!"

"Come, then. I am listening now. Explain." Her accents, her air were passionately peremptory.

Steven drew himself back with a proud movement; then he stood in silent, dark reflection.

One who had become his closest friend, though but a recent, chance acquaintance, and a mere vagabond musician at that, had advised him on this most crucial moment. The phrase was still ringing in his ears: "Tell her the naked truth."

Naked the truth was; ugly enough, in all conscience, to be convincing, if he could

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bring himself now to speak it: "*Your Aunt Betty offered herself to me—threw herself upon my protection. I did not love her, but I had no choice.*"

Aye, it was all very well to say: "You are an honest lad. Tell the naked truth!" (Thus his vagrant mentor.) But if a gentleman have behind him long generations of gentlemen, each of whom has planned his life upon the conventional code of the point of honour among gentlemen, he cannot easily bring his lips to form the words that will betray a woman in relation to himself—be it for what is dearer than life.

The groom was washing the horse's legs in the courtyard below, and singing some lilt to clink of bucket and plashing of water. These two who faced each other, love and hate in their foolish hearts, had heard the tune in happier moments, upon the fiddle of wandering Hans. Poignantly it struck them.

"After all, Aunt Betty but told me the truth—if a little late—you have nothing to say," said Sidonia, between teeth clenched on a sob.

"Only this," said Steven, tossing back his scornful head—"that I command you, as your husband, to come with me now."

Sidonia pointed to the door.

"Herr Graf von Kilmansegg, I expect to hear from the Court to-day anent the annulment of that ill-considered ceremony which made me your wife. My lawyers will call upon you."

"Madam," answered the Count, bowing in elegant rage, "I intend to take up my abode in this hotel. Therefore there will be no difficulty about my address. But annulments are not easily concluded without the consent of both parties."

He closed the door between them upon these words.

"He does not love me! He never loved me!" said Sidonia to her bursting heart. "It was all pride!"

But to know him near her—under the same roof—there was balm in that.

* * * * *

Little did the new guest guess, as he surveyed the chamber allotted to him at the "Aigle Impérial," that just beneath, Betty von Wellenshausen was in the midst of preparations of departure; that trunks were being packed, and all got ready for the immediate removal of herself, her niece, and their servants to the apartments within the Royal Palace, where the Burgrave, her husband, Chancellor to King Jerome, impatiently awaited them.

After striking his bargain with mine host, Steven went out to look for his road companion, Fiddle-Hans. Restless, he was anxious for movement and fresh air; profoundly troubled, he knew of no better help. He was prepared to be scolded by that erratic but uncompromising person for having woefully mismanaged the situation. On the other hand, he expected to be applauded for his sudden resolution of watching in person over his wife. Floating through the husband's incensed brain were vague plans of carrying off the obstinate little bride by force—a romantic exploit in which he could conceive Fiddle-Hans, the singer of youth and its madness, joining with enthusiasm.

* * * * *

The small brown town was filled with the most heterogeneous throng—Austrian and Italian hangers-on of the Court, French and Corsican adventurers, soldiers of as varied nationalities as were the uniforms of Jerome's fretful fancy; grenadiers, late of his brother, briefly royal of Holland, in their red coatees; wonderful blue hussars—French, most of them—very gallant, with a wealth of jangle, whether ahorse or afoot (these same wonderful blue hussars whom Steven had seen driven by the sheepskin Cossacks like wrack before the storm); *dragons d'Espagne*, green and orange, stern, lean, war-worn (unscrupulously intercepted, these, on their way to rejoin their imperial leader, and here disdainful of pinchbeck king and petty service); stolid Westphalian recruits lounging along the cobbles with the slouch of sullen discontent. Astounding diplomats slowly perambulating in astounding embroideries; academicians, too, with the green palms on coat-tail and cuff—for "Little Brother Jerome" still played at being as like big brother Napoleon as might be.

Market boors plodded by, blue-stockinged, crimson-waistcoated, and wide-hatted; shapeless country wenches tramped and fair ladies flashed past Steven reclining in coaches; and quite a swarm of lackeys, postilions, chasseurs, with all the insolence of the servants of dissolute masters, elbowed him aside, or appraised him with open comment. Had he not been so absorbed in his private anxiety, he might have noted, in spite of the superficial air of gaiety, bustle, and wealth, certain ominous signs of impending cataclysm around him—the swift passage here and there of an

"'My lawyers will call upon you.'"

urgent courier; the grave countenances of some officials; the little groups, knotted together in by-streets, whispering, and dissolving at the first hint of approaching police; the singing defiance of the students; the sulky muteness of the poorer burghers; and, above all, the febrile, overstrained note in the very merriment of the ruling class itself. There was a tinkling of madcap-bells at the Palace of Jerome that rang into the town; no one within those walls had a mind to hearken to the reverberating echoes of Dresden and Leipzig.

Steven sought his fiddler friend persistently, yet in vain. Sore at heart, and out of temper besides, he returned to the "Aigle Impérial," to be greeted by the news that mine host had that instant lost his best

lodgers in the persons of the noble Burgravine and her niece the Baroness Sidonia von Wellenshausen.

Sidonia under the roof of Jerome!

* * * * *

There was a Court-concert that night at the Royal Palace, and it was in the music-room that Sidonia was by command presented to Jerome.

She dropped her curtsy; here was a king for whose royalty, in her sturdy patriotism and her inherited race tradition, she felt neither allegiance nor respect. As she drew herself up from the perfunctory obeisance, she looked him in the face and met a glance that gleamed and flickered upon her with will-o'-the-wisp flame. Turning aside from that offensive smile, Sidonia became conscious of the gaze of the King's Master of the Horse towering over his dapper little sovereign. Steady enough this; something like the glare with which the beast of prey regards his quarry. The girl's heart sank with a double terror.

"I am charmed," said the King, "to behold at last with my own eyes the young heiress of Wellenshausen, in whose lovely person, I am told, is vested so much of my territory."

This was spoken in German with a pronounced Gallic accent. Then Jerome lapsed into French to say caressingly—

"Mademoiselle de Wellenshausen is welcome at my Court."

Burgravine Betty, escorting her husband's niece into the presence, was quick to seize the fact that Jerome's glance had glinted past her—past Betty von Wellenshausen!—to appraise the gawky child. Her sparkling, olive face went rigid and grey with the strongest emotion of which she was capable—mortified vanity.

"Your Majesty mistakes," said Sidonia. Her voice sounded in her own ears as a mere childish pipe; yet it was firm and clear. "Your Majesty mistakes. I am Countess Lee von Waldorf zu Kilmansegg."

Outward decorum is the rule even at the most amateur Court, yet the sensation created by the announcement Sidonia could feel to her innermost nerve. The countenance of Jerome became as suddenly and threateningly overcast as that of a spoilt urchin thwarted. He flung a look of anger at his Chancellor. The veins swelled on the crimsoning forehead of Colonel d'Albignac, the Master of the Horse. Betty's spite broke forth.

"Your Majesty," she interposed shrilly, "has already received information of the true position of affairs. A piece of quixotic nonsense on the part of my cousin, Count Kilmansegg, an ill-considered undertaking to which this child would hold him bound, against all . . . . against all proper pride, all feminine delicacy, and his own better judgment!"

She shot an arrow of fury at her niece; then she nudged the Burgrave, who instantly put in his deep bass—

"The deed of annulment is drawn up, sire."

Jerome's good humour returned. He rubbed his hands. In spite of all his royal assumptions, much of the exuberant gesture of the Corsican had stuck to him, to the infinite distaste of his stolid subjects.

"*Il faut aller vite, vite, alors.* We must make haste," he averred.

To make haste and enjoy was, indeed, the rule of Jerome's existence. Now, a Lent of unexampled rigour seemed inevitably drawing near him; and all the more vertiginous was his carnival. So vertiginous indeed, that, willingly blind though she was, the Queen, true German daughter of Würtemberg, had withdrawn from the *tourbillon*, giddy and panting, to take refuge at Napoleonshöhe till such time as her royal spouse would come to sober sense again.

Therefore was Sidonia's initiation to Court life presided over by the Sovereign only.

When the King had passed on, talking earnestly to the Burgrave, and Betty had taken voluble possession of Colonel d'Albignac, the little bride slipped away alone to a shaded corner of the great, over-decorated room. The pain of the wound her aunt's words had planted in her heart was at first so poignant that she had to rest and rally her strength, lest it should fail her altogether. Then her wits, naturally alert, and to-night abnormally stimulated, began to work. She was in danger—danger of what, she knew not. But it was something horrible, unspeakable. The looks the King and d'Albignac had cast upon her, the glance of odious intelligence they had then exchanged, her uncle's obsequious haste to disclaim her marriage, and her aunt's public insult, were as many lightning flashes showing the precipice yawning in the dark at her feet. Not a friend had she in the world to whom she could turn—save the man who did not love her—and a poor, wandering musician, now probably far away on some Thuringian road, playing gay tunes to the rhythm of his

own incurable melancholy. She pressed her hands against her burning eyeballs, for the brilliancy of the lights became unbearable. And as she stood leaning against the gilt pilaster, close to her, the orchestra, half hidden behind a bank of flowers, struck up a gay French air which added to her overwhelming sense of misery.

Her uncle's words, "The annulment deed is already drawn out," seemed to jig in her brain in time to the vulgar measure. It was almost the same phrase that she herself had flung at Steven—but now it bore a sound of cruel reality quite novel to her; and when a couple of horns took up the fiddles' theme, they seemed to be blaring to the world her own unutterable shame.

"*A piece of quixotic nonsense to which she would hold him, against all proper pride, all feminine delicacy, and—and his own better judgment!*"

How was it possible for anyone to be so abandoned, so helpless? Even the little furry things of the forest at home had their holes to which they could run and hide when they were hurt . . . the forest at home! With what longing did her soul yearn to the thought of the clean, green shelter, the scented pine-alleys, with long shadows cutting the yellow glades; to the great, sombre thickets where not even the most practised huntsman of the *Revier* could have tracked a little startled hind. . . . Dawn in the woods, with pipe of innocent birds waking up—violets, blinking dew, in the moss, and clean, tart breezes blowing free. . . . Eventide in the forest; the mild sun setting at the end of the valley, through the clearings, and the thrush chanting his last anthem on the topmost bough of the stone pine. . . . The scent of the wood-smoke from the forest-house, where foster-mother Friedel was preparing supper for her hungry sons, where all was so wholesome, so honest, so homelike; where at this moment—who knows?—kind Fiddle-Hans might be seated in the ingleglow, his strange music, lilt of joy and sorrow mingled, of humour and tenderness, floating out through the open door into the solemn forest-aisle. . . . Little Sidonia's thoughts began to wander from her own sorrow. She saw the sunrise in the forest, she felt the evening peace.

All at once, in her lonely corner, she started and opened her eyes; she brushed her hands across her wet lids. She was dreaming surely! And yet she could swear that the actual trill of the vagabond's violin was even now in the air, that its piercing sweetness and incomparable depth of sound were ringing in her ears.

"*Allons voir danser la grande Jeanne*" brayed the orchestra, but above the jigging and twiddling of fiddles, the mock laughter of the hautboy, above the infectious rhythm of flute and drum, came stealing in harmony, yet infinitely apart, the plaint of the mountain air, at once pathetic and happy, that had been known between her and the wanderer as *her* tune.

Surely, if she were not dreaming, then she was mad!

Suddenly, with crash and bang and roll of drum, *La Grande Jeanne* finished her dance—but, in half-muffled tone, a single violin went on; and above the sudden clamour of laughter and voices, Sidonia did plainly hear her tune calling her, insistent with all the urgency of a whispered message.

Scarcely aware of what she was doing, she left her hiding-place and went swiftly through the indifferent throng towards that call. With one exception the men of the orchestra had left their platform; and, behind a high group of palms, a solitary musician plied his bow softly, secretly, as if rehearsing to himself.

Sidonia pushed some branches apart. The player looked up. Their eyes met. Then she forgot to be astonished. She thought she had known it all along. He had come to save her. True friend!

"I knew it was you," she said. She laughed at him through the green palm-stems, her eyes sparkled. How could she ever have thought Fiddle-Hans would fail her at the moment of her need?

But Fiddle-Hans did not smile back. His face—so strange under powdered hair; over the mulberry uniform, bechained and besilvered, of Jerome's Court orchestra—was very grave.

"Little Madame Sidonia," he said, "what are you doing here?" He spoke sadly, and under his unconscious fingers his violin gave a sad *pizzicato* accompaniment to the words.

Sidonia looked at him with her child-eyes. She was half-angry that he should find fault with her—the Geigel-Onkel who hitherto had always thought all she did perfect! And she was half pleased that he should dub her "Madame," instead of the time-honoured "Mamzell." Foolish Sidonia, clinging in her heart to the honour she outwardly repudiated!

"Do you know what sort of a place this is?" pursued the fiddler, with ever-increasing

"'Why are you not with your husband?'"

severity. "Do you know with what people you are surrounded? Have you not heard the common saying that if it be doubtful whether an honest woman—save the unhappy Queen—ever crossed these Palace doors, to a certainty no honest woman ever went forth from them? Why are you not with your husband?—with your husband?" he repeated sharply.

Sidonia, who had hung her head, blushing, ashamed—for in truth she felt evil about her in every sensitive fibre—reared it on the last words.

"Geigel-Onkel!" she cried, "I have no husband, and you know it. That is past and done with." Then her heart began to beat very fast, and the smarting tears gathered in her eyes. "On pity, I will be no man's

wife! I was wedded out of pity! I will have none of it! I would rather die!"

"O, death!" said the fiddler, and struck his strings so that they wailed—"death is the least of evils—nay, the release of a clean, proud soul . . . . that is joy. The worst end of life is not death. Beware, little madam!" He had another change of tone: never had Sidonia been rated with such incisive earnestness. "Why, what a child are you! Yet none so childish but that you know full well this is no child's mischief, but woman's danger! With what anxiety am I here to save you from yourself; at what trouble! . . . . Only that the rats are flying already from the falling house; only that I happened to meet the second violin of Jerome's orchestra, an acquaintance of old—a musical rat in full scuttle!—I might still be racking my brains for means to come near you! Here am I this hour, wearing the livery of the Upstart, not knowing if I shall be given the necessary minute for speech. The prisons are stuffed full to-night, and Jerome is afraid of me. Let but his eye, or that of his spies, turn this way and recognise me, and it is to the lock-up with Fiddle-Hans! O, then, what of Madame Sidonia? Back to your husband! You toss your head at me? It was through pride the Angel fell—and he was Star of the Morning!"

"I don't know what you mean," said Sidonia.

"Nay," said Fiddle-Hans; "you know too much already. Fie, what a dance will there be here before the house falls! Even now Jerome is plotting his last gratification. Did not his eye fall upon you? Your husband's name, his sacred Austrian nationality—these are your only safeguard. And that name you are not to keep long. You are to become Madame d'Albignac. The puppet King has very little time left, as his lieutenant knows, and he, d'Albignac, will be glad to save something out of the ruins. You are a prize to both—and they are amicably agreed."

"I don't understand," said Sidonia again. She went white, then red, trembled and caught at the prickly stem of the palm.

"Take me away with you!" she broke out of a sudden piteously. "Save me!"

"I cannot save you," answered the wanderer. His voice was harsh, yet it trembled; he drew a harsh chord from his string. "No one can save you but your husband. Go back to him."

Then he began to tune his fiddle with fury, for his fellow-players were straggling back. Some of them looked curiously at the fine lady who was speaking to their unknown comrade so familiarly. Sidonia turned. Many of the great company were looking at her, too. Right across the room she saw Jerome and his equerry still talking together; and, as they talked, their eyes (or so she fancied) ever and anon sought her.

Panic seized her. But even in panic, Sidonia was loyal. She must not speak again to Fiddle-Hans, lest she bring him into deeper danger. Fiddle-Hans her friend, the wild wanderer, in prison! In prison for her! That would be terrible.

She wheeled round; and then, like a hunted thing, pushed her way blindly through the throng, making for the shelter of the Chancellor's apartment. People nudged each other and whispered as she passed. At the door, an old lady, with white hair and a soft, pink-and-white face, detained her by the skirt.

"Who are you, my dear, and whither so fast?"

"O, please," panted the girl, "let me go! I am Sidonia of Kilmansegg." Even in her agitation she did not forget the name that was her shield. "I must go back to my aunt."

The old lady nodded.

"That is all right," she said. "There is nothing to be frightened at. And if you want any advice, my dear, or help, you have only to ask for *Madame la Grande Maréchale*—that is myself. I am very fond of girls."

Her voice was purring, her smile was comfortable. As she moved away, Sidonia felt vaguely reassured. If her own kindred failed her, there was yet salvation; salvation other than the inadmissible humiliation of that return to the man she loved, but who did not love her: all that cruel Fiddle-Hans would devise for her!

In the Chancellor's apartment she found bustle and confusion. Two footmen staggered past her, bringing in trunks. The Burgravine's maids were running to and fro with folded packets of lace and silk.

For a second Sidonia stared aghast; then her heart leaped: Betty had received some hint, and these preparations were for their departure—to carry her into safety. She burst into her aunt's room: yes, there was Betty, already engaged in donning a travelling garb, and ever and anon clapping jewels into their cases with fervid haste. She looked up, her olive face thunder-dark, as she recognised her niece.

"Did you look for me?" cried the girl. "It was Fiddle-Hans told me. How horrible

it all is! I shall be ready in a minute! Where are we going?"

The Burgravine was silent for a second, fixing her with cold, blue eyes. Then she spoke, quietly and decisively—

"*I* am going back to Austria. I have done with Westphalia and all that belongs to it! I do not know what your plans may be, but they concern me no longer."

She closed the case she held in her hand; the little snap seemed to give final emphasis to her words. Sidonia stood bewildered.

"I have done with your Westphalia, my love," pursued the Burgravine with cheerful spite; "done with your uncle, my Bluebeard, *en premier lieu*, and with Jerome, that plebeian, that upstart!" Intense was the scorn with which she spoke the words: had not he glanced past her dainty personality to-night, to fix his royal favour upon a schoolgirl? Betty laughed. "Fortunately I have relations, and they summon me to quit *cette canaille*. O, I have been privately warned! They give your Jerome and his kingdom a week more of life, if so much. In Austria, *Dieu merci*, I shall be far away. I shall not see the *fantoche's* ridiculous fall!"

The young Countess of Waldorf-Kilmansegg stood stonily. Betty the Burgravine, running from place to place like a mouse, as she spoke, halted now in the middle of the room. Their eyes met; and their thoughts flashed at each other.

"And do you go alone?" asked Sidonia.

In her own ears her voice sounded strange; her heart was gripped as by iron fingers. Betty laughed again.

"Who knows?" she answered. "I may perchance find an escort. Count Waldorf-Kilmansegg will have signed, ere long, a certain precious document of yours, which I hear they bring him to-night. Then it will be '*Hop-là, postillon!*' with him also. He is my cousin," said pretty Betty demurely. "So, if I accept his protection, it will be perfectly right and proper."

Sidonia gave a sudden quiver, like a hind frightened. Then she turned and fled, even as flies the hind with the cruel hunt on her traces; and Betty's laugh pursued her like to the note of the horn.

She ran headlong down the passage and struck against the burly figure of no less a person than the Burgrave himself. The omen of trunks had not yet met his eye: he was in high good humour. Indeed, he was of those that have no scent for omens. His kinglet, but now, had promised him fresh territorial honour and rich reward, and he had no doubt of the royal power. There are those who would see the moving finger write, and never spell warning from the awful letters.

"Whither so fast, my maid?" he inquired, holding her not unkindly. She clung to him with sudden passion.

"O, Uncle Ludo, take me away from this place! Take me away to-night, this hour, at once! Let us go back to the dear old Burg!"

"Why, what is this?" He pushed her from him, good-humoured, bantering, fuddled with the royal Sillery. His sovereign and he had pledged a bumper to the heiress of Wellenshausen's altered prospects. "Na, na," said the Burgrave, and wagged his head jocosely. "Somebody would not be in such a hurry to run away if somebody knew what her old uncle had planned for her! Hey, my dear, that hasty marriage of yours was never more to my liking than to yours: and now we have a new husband for you. Aye, and a place at Court! Hey, little Sidonia! Such a fine husband, such a fine position!"

The girl raised her eyes and desperately scanned his empurpled countenance. Again the Burgrave archly shook his head, and laughter rumbled in his huge body. Aye, aye, it was the way of women to feign coyness, but men knew what was good for them. One must humour them from time to time, but never yield. She read something implacable in the stupidity of his eye. She thought of the old wild boars in the Forest: as well might she try to appeal to one of those!

He clutched her hands in his hot grasp; a faintness came over her.

"Aunt Betty is packing!" she cried wildly, inspired by woman's wit. "Don't you know? . . . . She is going back to Austria."

"What?" roared the Burgrave, and released her. He cantered sidelong down the passage to Betty's room.

"If you want help," had said the soft-voiced old lady, "ask for *la Maréchale de la Cour*." If ever a poor daughter of Eve wanted help, it was surely Sidonia, standing between the Scylla of nameless evil and the Charybdis of dire humiliation.

It was not in her nature to hesitate; she paused but to catch up a travelling cloak in her room; then seeking the outer corridor again, bade the first valet on her way guide her to the apartment of Madame la Grande Maréchale. She would wait (thought the

girl) for the great lady's return from festivity. There must be refuge where such gentle old age presided, and good counsel, and aid forthcoming on the morrow for her journey back to the Thuringian forest.

The Maréchale's apartments were on the ground floor, and Sidonia thought fortune favoured her when the porter informed her that the gracious one herself had that instant entered. Still more at ease felt she when the pretty old lady received her with open arms and cooing words of welcome—

"*Ma belle enfant*, this is well! I have presentiments. I expected you. That great bear of a Chancellor, your uncle, and the little minx of a wife he has . . . . (linnet-head, wasp-temper, ferret-heart—I know the kind! One look at her, *ma chère*, and I saw it all): that was no place for you. Nay, you wanted a friend, my dear, and it is well you came to me, very well." She nodded; and the fine bird-of-paradise plume in her gauzy turban quivered over her soft, white curls.

A second time that evening Sidonia had to struggle with rising tears, but these were tears of gratitude, of relief. Madame la Maréchale patted her on the shoulder, stooped to embrace her; there was a delicate atmosphere about her, of Parma powder and amber-scented laces.

"It is good, my child," she murmured, "to have a friend at Court—someone who knows the ways of it. *Ma petite*, you and I, we'll do great things together! Nay, but we will talk no more now. A little supper together? (*Hein, ma belle enfant*, what have you eaten to-day?)"

She rang a silver bell, and a smart *soubrette* appeared; she stared with bold, black eyes at the visitor.

"Bettine, *ma fille*," said the suave lady, "take . . . Mademoiselle into my chamber, and arrange me a little her coiffure before supper. You must be beautiful," she added, turning pleasantly again to Sidonia, "for I shall have a guest."

"*Par ici, mademoiselle*," said Bettine briefly. As she led Sidonia across the threshold of a violet-scented, violet-hued bower, the lady's dulcet tones called after her—

"And then return to me, *ma fille*. I have to speed thee with a little note."

"It is well, madam," answered the French girl, and closed the door.

Sidonia looked around, and then at the maid's hard face. It seemed to her as if a chasm had opened under her feet where she had thought to find firm footing. Her ears had been disagreeably struck by the word "Mademoiselle," and the emphasis that the old lady had placed on it. The reference to an expected visitor next filled her with inchoate suspicion, which the order concerning a note intensified. She now read an insolent meaning in Bettine's black eyes as they appraised her.

"Whom does your mistress expect to supper?" she asked with sharpness.

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"Madame la Maréchale's supper-parties are very amusing," she replied familiarly. "Little *soupers fins*—very amusing, very discreet. The great thing is that Mademoiselle should be beautiful. *Allons*, we must off with this cloak. Will Mademoiselle sit down? *O, que Mademoiselle est bien faite!* . . . . *Mais coiffée* (Mademoiselle forgives me?) in defiance of all common sense!"

Now Sidonia knew, before she had the certainty, into what a trap she had walked. And, with the clearness of her conviction, she also knew what she had to do. She sat down, silently, as bidden; and—while the odious touch of the Maréchale's maid played in her hair—made a steady inventory of the room. There was no door but the one leading back into the boudoir; great windows were curtained away behind the dressing-table.

"O, how much better is Mademoiselle like this!" cried Bettine, falling back to admire her work.

Sidonia gave her own reflection an anxious scrutiny. One word, one look, one sign of weakness, and her hastily formed plan might be frustrated. . . . . Beyond that possibility were the horrors upon which she could not look . . . upon which she would never look! For, at the worst, there was still a refuge. The fiddler's words—"The release of a clean, proud soul—that is joy!" came to her ever and again as upon a strain of his own music. And ever they brought her fresh strength and comfort.

"O, how beautiful is Mademoiselle!" cried Bettine again, this time with genuine enthusiasm. "Positively, it is flames she has in her glance, and no rouge could beat me the colour of those cheeks!"

"Bettine . . .!" rose the Maréchale's silver voice from the next room; and Sidonia, flinging herself into her part with the instinct of the defenceless, smiled gaily on the French girl as she bade her go.

"Mademoiselle will not forget 'tis I who has adorned her—when she is in power?" insinuated the Maréchale's maid.

"I shall not forget," said Sidonia between her teeth.

When the door had been closed between them, she seized the handle. Fortunately the Maréchale liked discreet hinges, and Sidonia was able noiselessly to draw the door the necessary fraction of an inch apart, that she might listen. There was not a tremor in her hands; she held her breath lest a rustle of silk should betray her. Strong spirits rise to the great situation.

There was whispering within. The ear of the little heiress of Wellenshausen had been trained in forest glades, full of the small sounds of lesser lives. She caught a word here, a word there.

". . . . The note . . . . in his Majesty's own hands. . . . Thou has well understood, my girl?"

"*Mais oui, madame.*"

Bettine's whisper carried far. But now the Maréchale made a softer communication, of which the listener could gather no import, and to which Bettine's answer gave no clue. It was emitted with a laugh: "O, no, Madame deceives herself—we are not so scared as all that, believe me!"

A dulcet titter joined the insolent note of the servant.

"At least the little bird is in the cage," said the Maréchale, as she laughed.

It was more than enough. Sidonia closed the door. She found a bolt which moved as willingly as all the rest under her fingers. . . . . Then a frenzy of haste came upon her. The cloak over her pale dress—the hood over Bettine's fine coiffure! And now the window! People who shut up a little bird in a cage should make sure that the bars are close enough to keep it safe; for the bird has wings, and its heart beats towards freedom, towards the mate, towards the nest! The Maréchale's apartments were on the *rez-de-chaussée*; but had they been on the topmost floor, that window would yet have been the way of Sidonia's flight.

O, how deliciously the chill, pure air beat upon her face after that evil hothouse atmosphere! By the stillness and the fragrance, by the soft earth under her feet, she knew she had alighted into the Palace garden. It was a murky night, and the rain was falling; the distant lights of the park gates glimmered fitfully.

Sidonia had no idea whither to turn; but the intention of her heart was undeviating as the flight of the homing bird. There was only one refuge for her, only one place for her—her husband's breast. Her road was clear: she was going to Steven, and after that nothing would ever matter again.

She set off running in the direction of the gateway lamps. In a minute her light ball-slippers were soaked with wet, clogged with mud; her narrow skirts clung against her silk stockings; now she brushed against low bushes, now nearly fell. She could run no more; she must grope her way. But presently her eyes became more accustomed to the dimness. The whiteness of an alley glimmered to her between rows of trees; it led down to the lights. Here on firm ground, she was able to make speed again, catching up her impeding skirts to free her flying feet. The gates were unlocked. There was not even a sentry in the box to challenge, as Sidonia slid by. Within the lodge rose song and laughter and clinking of glass. Like master, like man!

Though the street on which she emerged was paved, it was meagrely lighted, and contained but a few poor houses opposite the park walls. The road seemed to lead upwards towards the country, downwards towards the town. Almost without reflection, she took the downward turn, drawing the folds of her cloak more closely over her tell-tale garments, and the hood deeper round her face. Here she must go sedately, though the hammering of her own pulses seemed like the footsteps of relentless pursuers, and the mad impulse was to keep ever running from them. It had been to her as a night-mare upon her across the dark park, but the passage through the town was infinitely more terrible. She looked back on the close solitude as to a haven of shelter. Yet unfalteringly, steadily, she tramped on, along the mazes of dirty streets; now pausing to ask her way of some respectable-looking burgher-woman—sometimes kindly answered, sometimes rebuked as a good-for-nothing, sometimes jeered at for her muddy finery. Once a gang of students surrounded her, laughing and dancing, mocking her in garbled French; and she thought she must have died of terror. When, however, one of them caught her by the waist, her anger rose, and she reviled him in vigorous Thuringian; it was no true German who would insult a helpless woman! Whereat they all fell back from her, abashed and respectful, and she pursued her way with deliberate gait, though her heart was beating to suffocation.

Further on, for the length of a street, a man with a dark, outlandish face and gold rings in his ears followed her step by step: and that was the most awful moment of

the night's journey. But in the shadow of a porch she marked the glint of a watchman's halbert; to him she went boldly and, in her dire strait, told him her story in the good mother tongue common to both, and begged him to guide her to the inn.

He listened to her in silence, his small,

"But had they been on the topmost floor, that window would yet have been the way of Sidonia's flight."

shrewd eyes searching her face, as she instinctively thrust it from the hood, that its pleading should abet her words.

Then, breaking forth into a bitter curse against the foreigner, he held out his hand and took hers as if she had been a child.

And like a child, she went gladly beside him, listening with a vague sense of comfort to the muttered words in which, in ever broader Thuringian dialect, he foretold the coming clean-out of honest Westphalia, the downfall of monkey-tyrants and the approaching good days, when decent women could walk unmolested through the streets of old Cassel, and true-minded Germans would come to their own again.

* * * *

"I am the Countess Kilmansegg," said Sidonia to the sleepy servant who came to meet her at the entrance of the "Aigle Impérial."

She was careless now of recognition, and flung back the hood from her fair, dishevelled head.

The man gaped at her. It was the "Mamzell Baroness." (The Burgravine had admitted no other title.) But the visitor's eye was imperious; without a word, he preceded her up the square, dark stairs, to the second-floor room. He would have knocked, but she dismissed him: "I will announce myself," she said.

The room was warm and light, but it was empty. Sidonia's heart seemed to empty itself, too, and become an aching void. She closed the door and sat down hopelessly. But, after a while, a sense of shelter, a physical, a moral warmth of comfort crept upon her. She marked that Steven's chattels were scattered around. No fear, then, but that he would return! The vague fragrance of the lavender scent he liked brought his presence suddenly and vividly to her. The little bride melted into tears. She was worn out; her aching feet were stinging as she held them against the warm porcelain of the stove. Her whole being seemed melted, her spirit broken; but there was a balm sweeter than triumph in this hour of her woman's surrender. All Betty's words, her gibes and threats, even what had seemed to be Steven's actual admissions, passed from her mind, as if washed away by these healing tears. There are moments when the soul can see beyond facts,

Presently the heat began to tell upon her exhausted frame. She felt herself floating away into vague little sleeps, to awake, her heart beating in her throat with reminiscences of past alarms. Thus she started at length from a vivid dream that the Burgrave and Betty, d'Albignac and Jerome, had tracked her and were carrying her back. She came to full consciousness of solitude, but could not still the wild fear of the nightmare . . . Betty's cunning was as a sleuth-hound—she would well know where to trace her . . . The man below had recognised her; it would be bootless to lock the door, for one thrust of the Burgrave's shoulder would dispose of sounder defences—Steven would return, and never know . . . ! She rose trembling from her seat and looked round. Then a quaint and childish thought sprang into her brain; the great old German bed in the alcove was hung with curtains; she would creep into its inviting shelter and draw the yellow damask folds. There would she be safe as a bird in her nest behind the leaves—in a room within a room. And, hidden, she could listen for her husband's step.

* * * * *

Steven Lee came heavily up the stairs. For two hours, raging at the sound of distant revelry, he had paced the Palace hall, expecting an answer to his letter to the Burgrave demanding of him his wife. In the end he had only escaped arrest by the help of a good-natured official whose heart inclined towards the handsome young stranger with the generous purse and the pale, stricken face.

Helplessly he had drifted back to the "Aigle Impérial": perhaps Fiddle-Hans might have been inspired to seek him there! But a very different personality sat, awaiting his return and feeding patience with cognac, in the public *salon*.

It was d'Albignac, the King's Master of the Horse. At sight of Steven he sprang to his feet and saluted with a great air of cordiality, running over the Austrian's name and title, and announcing his own with glib affability.

"We have met before, sir," sternly said Steven, who was in fine humour for destruction.

"I think not," answered the equerry; his eyes had a red glitter which denied his smile. "I think not, M. le Comte. Nay, I am positive it is the first time I have had the pleasure of addressing you."

Steven shrugged his shoulders: "Have it so," he said contemptuously, and glanced at the bloated cheek against which his hand had once exulted. "After all, it is you who have the more striking cause to remember. What do you want with me?" he added with truly British bluntness.

D'Albignac's smile was stiff over his yellow teeth; his fingers twitched over the bundle of papers he had pulled out of his sabretache. But the Master of the Horse had no illusions as to the length of Jerome's power; and that document, once properly endorsed, meant his own future prosperity. It was worth a minute's urbanity towards one whom otherwise it would have been relief to hew down.

"I have business with you—business of delicacy, sir; but yet, I trust, easily despatched. A short private conversation between us two." He cast a meaning look at the French officers playing piquet and tric-trac in their proximity.

"I can conceive no business," said Steven, "between us two, sir, but one. Nevertheless, come to my room. I can promise you that my answer will be of quick despatch."

So he walked up the ill-lit stairs, with d'Albignac clanking at his heels, and pushed his way into his bedchamber before him—the creature could not be treated otherwise than as the dog he was.

"Shut the door," said he, "and say your say."

Again d'Albignac successfully fought his own fury.

"A matter of delicacy, as I said, my dear sir. . . . Mademoiselle de Wellenshausen is, you are aware, now at the Palace?"

"Are you speaking of Countess Waldorf-Kilmansegg?" put in Steven briefly.

"Immaterial, now!" deprecated the other. "The marriage, I understand, is regretted on both sides. Your signature here, and we do the rest."

Steven listened with outward calmness.

"We?" echoed he. "What have you to say to this, Colonel d'Albignac?"

It is not always by weight of hand or stroke of sword that man can have his sweetest vengeance upon man. D'Albignac, as he replied, knew that he was at last paying off scores.

"The King," he said—"my King, His Majesty Jerome—takes an interest in the lady."

Steven felt suddenly as if the clasps of his cloak were strangling him. He tore them apart, falling back two or three steps, that he might fling the burden on the bed. He

"Ah Sidonia . . . !"

must have his limbs free. The grating voice went on—

"It is my Sovereign's desire that the young heiress of Wellenshausen should espouse a member of his household. And his choice has fallen upon your servant here —I may say the charming creature is not unwilling——"

Confusedly, through the humming of the blood in his ears, Steven heard. Mechanically he gathered his cloak into a bundle and pulled the damask curtain aside. Then he stood, silent, as if stricken, his back to his tormentor.

D'Albignac rubbed his hands together and chuckled. It was better than the most sounding return slap, better than feeling the easy steel run through flesh or grate against bone!

The cloak glided from Count Kilmansegg's arm. He closed the curtains deliberately and faced his visitor.

"If you will leave the deed, Colonel," said he, "I will peruse it to-night, and you can have it back in the morning."

He took the paper courteously from d'Albignac's hand. His face was paler than before; but there was a singular smile upon it, a singular light in the eyes.

"And it is the greatest heiress in Westphalia. What a *morgue* these Austrians have!" thought the Colonel, as he drew a noisy breath of laughter and relief. "The merest hint, it was enough!—Enchanted," he went on aloud, "my young friend, to find you so reasonable. I see you take me—— Ah, yes! these are sad times, and the soldier of fortune (such as I am) cannot afford to be squeamish. Hey! the King sups with Countess Kilmansegg. . . . Nay, shall we not say . . . Mademoiselle de Wellenshausen? . . . . to-night, at this moment!"

Steven's smile flashed broadly a second. "He would grin on the rack," thought d'Albignac.

"*A demain*, Colonel," said Steven, "but not before noon, please."

His tone was quiet, even soft. He advanced without hurry towards his guest, tapped him lightly on the shoulder, and pointed to the door.

The two stood looking, eye into eye; and the brute rose again clamouring in d'Albignac's huge body. But something inscrutable in Steven's glance, its fire, almost its gaiety, made him quail. He felt that he was more than matched, and broke ground with a clumsy bow, a failure for irony. His great boots resounded down the wooden stairs.

Steven parted the curtains cautiously and stood looking down upon the sleeping figure.

So the bird had come home, after all! Sidonia lay like the weary child she was, wrapped in so profound a slumber that even d'Albignac's noisy presence had failed to disturb her. Her slender arms were outflung, her hands faintly curled in an attitude of utter relaxation. Through parted lips her breath came as placidly as an infant's. The yellow hair sprang in tangled masses, aureole-like, reund the little pale face. Never had her extreme youth so utterly betrayed itself. But how wan she seemed—how exhausted through all the placidity of her repose! The narrow satin skirts were mud-stained; one little silk-clad foot, outthrust, shoeless, was stained with mire—aye, and streaked with blood.

His child-wife . . .!

Over what rough ways had she come to him? Past what chasm, blacker, deeper, more relentless, than the Baron's oubliette?

Slowly, hardly wotting what he did, Steven went down on his knees beside her, unconsciously still clutching d'Albignac's paper. An infinite tide of love, of protecting tenderness flooded his whole being.

His child-wife!

The watchman was chaunting the tale of the midnight hour when a peremptory knock at the door was heard, and Fiddle-Hans broke in upon Steven. He halted for a second, though his mission was urgent, to wonder at the light on the young husband's face as the latter rose from his knees and came forward to greet him.

The musician had never thought so pure a joy could reach his desolation in this world. It was no surprise to him that Sidonia, waking, should thrust out a suddenly rosy face between the yellow curtains; he had known, through Steven's eyes, that the children he loved were together.

"Steven!" said Sidonia.

"Ah, Sidonia . . .!" cried Steven.

He ran to her. And, regardless of Fiddle-Hans, they clasped each other, the deed of annulment dropping between them.

"Now, children!" said Fiddle-Hans briskly—he was laughing, but the tears, which none had ever seen before in them, glittered in his eyes—"you will have plenty of time by and by; now it is haste, haste, haste! I have a carriage for you waiting below. Ha, little Madame Sidonia, laugh with me! It is the Burgravine's own carriage—nothing less. Nay, German wives do not so easily escape their husbands, even

at Jerome's Court. My Lady Burgravine makes no journeying to-night, or ever, away from her lord! A *berline* and four good post-horses . . . 'twere pity to waste them! Quick, children! for I tell you night will not be over ere the storm break on this town!"

Sidonia had little preparation to make.

"It was a melody of love, of farewell, of wandering."

She put on her cloak. From the depths of her hood, her pretty face looked inquiringly at Fiddle-Hans.

"Where are we going?" said she.

"Where?" echoed the wanderer, with a lilt in his voice as if to echoes of music. "Where, but to the forest—to the green arms that will hold your love so safely, so discreetly? To the forest-house, little madam, whither I once brought a youth who had missed his springtime and lost his way, that he might find them both!"

* * * * *

The fiddler sat on the box, and the horses went roundly. Sidonia lay on her husband's shoulder, half dreaming again, lulled by the drip of the rain without, the monotonous movement of the carriage, the rhythmic beat of the hoofs against the soft road. They had passed the inn of "The Three Ways," and the forest had taken them into its embrace, when she started suddenly with a faint cry—

"What was that?"

A dull booming still reverberated in her ears.

"That was cannon," said Steven. "It is the end of Jerome's kingdom!"

By sunset they reached the forest-house, where there was great marvel and welcome, and a fine supper in the raftered room. Afterwards they sat round the great hearth. And whenever they were not laughing and talking, the forest peace drew about the lovers and held them close, as Fiddle-Hans had prophesied. It was a blessed evening.

As the ruddy light played on the musician's face, it showed a strange serenity.

"You will always live with us, dear Fiddle-Hans," said Sidonia over and over again. And each time she said it, he smiled as if content.

* * * *

Now, in the wonderful dawn of the forest, Steven awoke next morning, and though his heart was as a bird's in spring for happiness, yet was there a sense of trouble, of anxiety upon him which had seemed woven into his dreams.

They had left their window open to the moonlight, and it had flooded in upon them, but the dawn mystery without held aloof, veiled from sight like an Eastern bride. Thin grey vapours hung as a curtain before the open casement. Steven sat up, his pulses

beating fast. He strained his ear: heard flutter of leaves, drip drip of dew, chirp of awakening birds . . . then a faint strain of music that seemed as if it passed through a dream. The melody drew more distinct, though still subdued; it rose, softly plaintive; it was joyous and yet sad, secret and yet an appeal. And through it all there was a rhythm as of restless feet: it was a melody of love, of farewell, of wandering. Fainter it grew and was lost once more in the whispers of the woods. It was silent at last, while still it seemed to sing.

A sudden pain gripped Steven's heart. He knew that Fiddle-Hans had gone.

* * * * *

Through the dim, wet woodland the musician tramped.

Already the scent of thrifty Mother Friedel's early fire was floating in the air; it greeted his nostrils with the call of the hearth; but he had resolutely turned his back upon the forest-house and the young happiness it sheltered. His work was done; and he must wander again, for solitude was all that God could give him on this earth: solitude and ceaseless movement to numb the pain in his heart. He felt very old and tired; his face was grey and stern as he set it for the high road.

All at once the dark forest-glade opened before him, and the land fell away towards the plain, all bathed in golden light.

The sun was rising in such radiance that it seemed to hold the promise of an Eternal Day.

THE SIREN CALL.

I HEAR the voice of April, calling me
To drop my burden, rid my grief, be still—
And follow her o'er vale and plain and hill
Unto the ways of joy. Alluringly
The iris stars the meadow, and the free,
Glad morning breezes greet the daffodil;
The sun showers gold; and wild and sweet and shrill
The lark flings wide his poignant ecstasy.

The new-born leaves form mysteries of gloom
To tempt the nesting birds; the garden bowers
Thrill with the tender breathing of the flowers;
The bees swing low to meet their fragrant doom;
And love once more begs my companioning,
When April sings the madrigal of Spring!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

GREEN POULTRY.

By C. D. LESLIE.*

"EVER been in the States, sir?" said the little man suddenly.

We, the only two passengers in the express from Reading to London, were killing time by discussing Buff Orpingtons, the popularity of yellow-coloured fowls, and fancy poultry generally.

"No," I answered, rather puzzled: the transition was abrupt.

"A remarkable people, our cousins," he went on in a voice of respect; "their inventive genius is stupendous, simply stupendous. I assure you, sir, the man who can get the better of a sharp American is a wonderfully clever fellow."

"They've given us several new breeds of poultry."

"They have, sir; and there are sharp men in the poultry world. Now, when I was in New Swindon—did you ever hear of Seth Long and the Chota-hazi fowls he introduced? It created some sensation at the time."

I acknowledged my ignorance, and in response to my entreaties the little man told me the following story.

About two years ago, I was in New Swindon, a flourishing city out west, of some fifty thousand inhabitants. Cotton was the chief local product and manufacture, and poultry-keeping the chief recreation outside sports. Fancy poultry, and especially endeavours to produce new breeds or varieties, occupied the spare time of many of the principal citizens. Every garden had a fowlhouse, and never was there such a place for cocks and hens; roosters crowed and hens cackled from sunrise to sunset. Then, at midnight, the cocks would wake up to see if it were morning, and crow before going to sleep for an hour, then they'd wake up and crow again, and so on till daylight. Strangers to the town would find this harassing at first, but New Swindonians didn't mind. Indeed, when business took them to other cities, they found themselves unable to sleep without the usual lullaby from the fowlhouse. Poultry-shows were frequently held, the chief being the New Swindon Poultry Association's Annual Exhibition.

"Mr. Seth Long."

I had been a resident in New Swindon about a month when the Poultry Association held its annual show, and having a slight acquaintance with the hon. secretary, Colonel Ulysses Jackson, I went to the Town Hall the day before, when the birds were being penned—not out of curiosity, for I hadn't much knowledge of poultry, but by profession I was a photographer, and I hoped to get some orders to photo exhibits.

Not long after I entered, and while exchanging a few words with the Colonel, a tall, thin man, carrying a poultry-hamper, joined us.

"Which of you gentlemen is Colonel Jackson?" he asked, and, when the Colonel had acknowledged his identity, pursued: "My birds are unique, sir, and I wouldn't have harm come to them for fifty thousand dollars. I'd be obliged if you'll lock the door when I've penned them."

"Certainly, sir. What is the number of your exhibit?"

"Number six," replied the exhibitor.

The Colonel turned to the catalogue he carried. "Mr. Seth Long," he read, "trio of Chota-hazi fowls." "You fix 'em, Mr. Long, and I'll come to you directly."

"Our great class," he added to me, "for new and distinct varieties of domestic poultry; the Major gives a prize of five

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hundred dollars for the best pen of a cock and two hens. I wonder what Chota-hazis are like."

A few minutes later we went to see them. Mr. Long was shutting the wire door; the Colonel glanced at the birds.

"Great Cæsar!" he shouts, clutching me, "am I colour blind?"

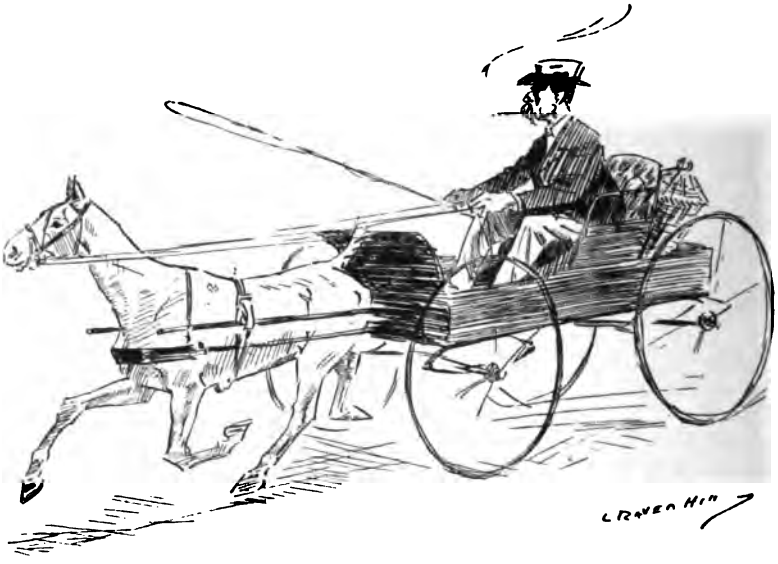
I stared, bewildered too, for the poultry were green, a vivid green like a paroquet; and, as you may know, sir, green poultry are unknown.

"I guess not, Colonel," drawled out Seth Long—"you ain't if you see green."

"My dear sir," says the Colonel, "permit me to shake hands with you. What a sensation for New Swindon! what a triumph for our show! To think that I should live to see green poultry!" His emotion overpowered him. "But is the colour genuine? Where do they come from?" he goes on anxiously.

"I guess so, Colonel." Seth picked up two or three loose feathers from the hamper. "Try any test you like; it's natural green. They come from Japan. My brother, a ship's officer, brought them as a present for me. He got them from the interior."

The birds certainly looked very striking. They were big, and shaped like a Plymouth Rock or Wyandotte, and the rich green contrasted well with their yellow legs and small, scarlet combs and ear-lobes. The Colonel fetched a special padlock for the door, and charged the night watchman to look specially after them.



"A buggy drove up."

The rumour of the green Chota-hazi fowls ran round the city, and next morning the *Daily Argus* said something concerning them. The show was crowded. There was as much excitement as over a Presidential election. Nothing else was talked of, and when the judges, after careful examination, had declared the colour natural, Seth was offered as much as two thousand dollars for his birds, and five dollars apiece was bid for any eggs they laid. But he declined all offers to sell.

In an interview with an *Argus* reporter, Seth said he had lately failed as a real estate agent in New York, and the Chota-hazis were almost his only possession. He thought he would settle in New Swindon if he could get a clerkship, and raise Chota-hazi chickens in his spare time. As soon as this was published, he had about fifty offers of partnership on advantageous terms, but he said he guessed he'd retain all his rights in the birds and play a lone hand.

Still, the citizens of New Swindon didn't intend to lose Seth as a resident, and the honour of their city being the home of the Chota-hazi fowl, so the Colonel and other prominent men bestirred themselves and got him a post as resident clerk in an estate office where there wasn't much work. Seth lived by himself over the office, and kept his fowls in the garden at the back.

The winter broke up early that year, just after the show, and Seth hadn't been three weeks in New Swindon before the Chota-hazis began to lay. Among the presents he accepted were a couple of "New Swindon Invincible" incubators—the kind universally used throughout the district, and giving better results, it was said, than hens. In one of these the first dozen Chota-hazi eggs were placed in the presence of a select gathering of poultry-fanciers. So much interest in their fate was evinced that the *Argus* found it necessary to publish daily bulletins.

On the eighth day they were tested, and

"High words arose, and language unsuited to the peaceful and pastoral pursuit of poultry-keeping."

nine pronounced to contain chickens. All went well till the fourteenth day, when the *Argus* announced—

"It is with the deepest regret we hear from Mr. Seth Long that two Chota-hazi eggs are addled. We tender to our distinguished townsman our sympathy for this loss, and trust he will be more fortunate with the remainder."

On the fifteenth day: "Acting on the advice of Colonel Jackson and other well-known experts, the temperature in the

incubator was lowered from 104 degrees to 103. The eggs are well."

On the eighteenth day: "We learn a further egg is addled, the remaining six contain live chickens, and are progressing favourably. Fortunately the weather continues mild and springlike, which is all in their favour."

On the nineteenth day: "The eggs are all 'starred,' and good hopes are entertained of a successful hatch."

The great curiosity, of course, was to see if the chicks would hatch out green. Seth himself said he didn't know, but he invited Colonel Jackson and three other fanciers to see the chickens on the following morning. I was also to come to photograph them. We all met outside the office at seven o'clock next day. Everybody was up early in New Swindon, as there was the poultry to tend before going to business. Seth opened the door to us.

"There's a rare noise in the incubator," he said, when he had greeted us. "I haven't looked, but I guess they're all out."

The incubator stood in the kitchen; we all assembled round it, and, amid a breathless silence, Seth slowly opened the drawer. There sat six fluffy dark green chickens. We shook hands with Seth and congratulated him.

"This day marks an epoch in the history of the city, sir," observed the Colonel solemnly.

The Poultry Association gave Seth a dinner that evening, and the day marked the height of his popularity. Presently there was some dissatisfaction. Other eggs were hatching, and more little Chota-hazi chicks appearing, and now everybody wanted to buy eggs, and Seth wouldn't sell. Certain citizens, who had obliged him in various ways, felt hurt at this conduct. First he promised to sell when fifty chicks were out; but just when this happened he changed his mind, owing to a letter received from his brother. This invited Seth to join the writer in New York very shortly, as he intended to start a shipbroking agency. So Seth decided to leave New Swindon for good in a couple of months, selling all his chickens just before he left. This contented most who wanted Chota-hazis, and some made bids at once, especially for the original trio; but Seth declared it wouldn't be fair to sell privately, as all were to go by auction in lots of three. Eggs he began to sell three weeks before the date of his departure.

There were at this time over fifty chickens running in the garden, and a busy man was Seth, and mighty the care he took of them. The chicks came out wonderfully true to colour, as far as one could see, for visitors weren't allowed to handle them. By arrangement I had sole rights of photographing Chota-hazis, and I'd have made a good thing out of it if Seth hadn't insisted on half profits. Colour photographs I called them, but I had to add the colour to each print, and it occupied all my time.

There were crowds of visitors to see the chickens and inquire about the auction, and I noticed (being often on the premises) that nearly all the people coming had some private talk with Seth, and left in mighty good humour. I began to think he was selling privately; and this proved correct, for one day he said—

"I know you don't make much out of the photographs, so I'll do you a good turn. You may have lot four, a trio of two-month-old chicken, for three hundred dollars—they'll fetch more than that at the sale." This offer sounded liberal; but I wasn't intending to speculate in chickens, and said so.

Two days later I was up early, and thought I'd go round to Seth's and take a photograph. I walked over, my apparatus in hand, and was knocking at the door when a buggy drove up and Major Cary got down.

"Good morning, Major," I says. "Making Seth an early call?"

"Yes, I am," he answers, and goes on: "To speak truth, I've bought two lots of chickens by private arrangement; and as the auction is to-morrow, I've come to fetch them."

We waited a bit; and as Seth didn't answer the door, we concluded he was in the garden feeding his chickens; but when we walked round, there was no sign of him about.

"Where can he be?" began the Major, and then: "Ah, Colonel! good morning to you! What brings you here so early?"

The reason was pretty obvious: Colonel Jackson was carrying a poultry-hamper, and looked annoyed at encountering us.

"Fact is, Major, I persuaded Seth to let me have the adult trio of fowls, and a pen of chickens—lot number nine."

"Oh!" says the Major; "lot nine, did you say? You've made a mistake, sir. I've bought lot nine, and paid for them."

The Colonel glared at him. "I've not made a mistake, sir; lot nine I bought, and paid for, as Seth Long will tell you. Where is he?"

We knocked and hammered at the door without response, and then, finally, we broke

a window and got in that way. The house was empty; the incubator stood in the kitchen, the keys of the chicken-houses on the mantelpiece, but Seth was gone. Meantime more fanciers kept arriving with hampers for chickens they had bought; and comparing notes, it became soon evident that Seth had sold all his birds two or three times over, and the citizens of New Swindon into the bargain.

Soon there were assembled in that back garden as violently excited a body of gentlemen as could be found between the Atlantic and Pacific. High words arose, and language unsuited to the peaceful and pastoral pursuit of poultry-keeping. Seth had skipped, taking the dollars he'd been paid in advance, and the question of ownership for the different lots was complicated enough to puzzle King Solomon. One man had paid three hundred dollars for lot two, four days before; and another, three hundred and fifty for the same birds. Which was the owner? For the original trio there were five claimants, and altogether Seth had received nearly twenty-five thousand dollars for the Chota-hazi fowls and chickens.

"I pity him if he ever meets Colonel Jackson."

Still, the birds were left, the unique Chota-hazis; and some talk began of pooling the claims and raffling the lots, when the Rev. Amos joined us. He was greeted with some laughter, for we all thought it was the old story. But it proved something far worse. He had bought a sitting of eggs three weeks before; they'd hatched that morning, and he brought the chickens to show Seth and demand an explanation. One was needed. The chicks had all hatched out striped brown and white, like Plymouth Rocks.

The faces of the fanciers grew long as fiddles at sight of the chicks, and certain apprehensions were uttered. Then somebody suggested there was no proof the eggs Seth had sold were laid by his own birds. It would be just like him, it was argued, to palm off common eggs for the Chota-hazis, and for the moment they cursed Seth again and cheered up. The fowls and chickens were let out, fed and handled, and then suspicion returned. Green they certainly were, but there was something doubtful about the under-colour, and finally it was resolved to leave the birds there a few days before settling the vexed question of ownership.

Meantime inquiries for Seth proved he had been seen on the platform the previous night before the mail left, and that was the last New Swindon ever saw of him.

For about three days the excitement over the Chota-hazis lasted, and then the most hopeful were compelled to admit the full magnitude of the fraud. The wonderful birds were nothing but Plymouth Rocks dyed green. So much was plain; but the composition of the marvellous dye Seth had applied, which had successfully defied all tests and completely hoodwinked the New Swindon fanciers, was never discovered. The trick must have been hard work to carry through, especially when the chickens became more numerous and were feathering. Moreover, dyeing the newly hatched chicks as soon as they were dry must have been no easy task. But he carried it through, sir, successfully, and that he was a cute man we must all admit; but I pity him if he ever meets Colonel Jackson or any of the New Swindon fanciers who bought his Chota-hazi fowls.

THE COMMISSARIAT OF OUR RAILWAYS.

BY CHARLES H. GRINLING.

IT was, I believe, the great Napoleon who said that an army moves on its stomach, meaning thereby that the distance it can cover depends upon the efficiency of its commissariat. The same principle applies to the journeys of peaceful travellers, and therefore the business of providing food and drink is closely associated with that of transportation. Stage-coaching was intimately allied with innkeeping; and every proprietor of a passenger vessel is of necessity also a caterer, unless it be merely a ferry-boat, or a pleasure-ship the cruises of which are limited to an hour or two. A railway train crossing a great continent resembles an ocean-going vessel in being a travelling hotel; but the two small islands of which the United Kingdom consists provide no continuous railway journeys longer than can be accomplished in a single day or night. Therefore the term "travelling hotel" cannot be appropriately applied to any train running on British or Irish railways, for our railway companies are not called upon to make provision in the same set of coaches for both day and night journeying.

In the United Kingdom the long-distance traveller by day is provided with conveniences for taking all his meals on board, and the night passenger is provided with a comfortable bed, and with such light refreshments as he requires between dinner and breakfast. The task of the commissariat of our railways is to that extent simpler than on Continental lines; but, on the other hand, the provision of meals for shorter-journey passengers is carried on more extensively, and more perfectly, in the United Kingdom than on the railways of any other country, besides which our railway companies stand in the unique position of being themselves large hotel proprietors. This involves so heavy an addition to the work of the commissariat departments of the leading lines as to place the importance of this branch of our railway service far above the corresponding section of any other railway administrations in the world.

FIRST-CLASS DINING-CAR, LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

Some difference of opinion prevails amongst the railway authorities of the United Kingdom as to the place which should be occupied by the commissariat

department in the polity of their undertakings. The more generally accepted view is that it is the business of railway companies, in carrying on their hotels and refreshment-rooms, to cater only for actual or potential passengers. Their object in undertaking commissariat (according to this view) is to encourage travel on their lines by filling up gaps in the general catering enterprise — where the absence of facilities for obtaining food or lodging is prejudicially affecting the traffic of their railways—but not to compete with other caterers or hotel-keepers, where the public is sufficiently well cared for without their intervention. Others, however, hold that, theoretically sound though these limitations may be, it is commercially impossible to keep within them. These authorities take their stand on that axiom of modern business competition, that "there is always most room at the top." If a railway company is to succeed with its hotels, say they, it must conduct them on the most go-ahead lines and offer the greatest possible combination of attractions.

Looked at from a practical point of view, the commissariat department of a railway cannot be separated from the traffic department, any more than a steamship company can be expected to carry on its catering business separately from its general trade. Something must be debited to the exigencies of competition, something more to advertisement; and it would puzzle the directors and general managers themselves to say in some cases whether a certain expenditure had been justified or not. Broadly speaking, the commissariat department is not expected to contribute to the dividend; but, on the other hand, many of its branches do pay, and that handsomely, whilst others are, no doubt, carried on at a loss.

Photo by] [*G. P. Abraham, Keswick.*

THE FURNESS ABBEY HOTEL, OWNED BY THE FURNESS RAILWAY COMPANY, AND WORKED BY MESSRS. SPIERS AND POND, LTD.

BUFFET-CAR, GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The simplest way for a railway company to provide refreshments for its passengers is to let the work out to a firm of caterers, such as Messrs. Spiers and Pond or Bertram and Co. This was very generally done in the early days of railway enterprise, and it is still the practice of the lines running southwards from London, of the North British (in part), and of a number of the smaller companies. In such cases the railway company usually provides the permanent structures, be they refreshment-rooms or hotels, on the basis of receiving rent from the contractors in the form of a fixed

percentage of the gross takings; but the agreement recently made between Messrs. Lyons and the London, Chatham and Dover is on the basis of profit-sharing rather than tenancy; in the case of the London and South-Western, Messrs. Spiers and Pond have a lease of the catering for the dining- and luncheon-cars as well as the refreshment-rooms, but the fine hotel at Southampton is managed by the railway authorities themselves, who also do their own catering on their steamboats. A leasing arrangement saves the railway company from the risks incidental to the catering business, whilst they retain, by the terms of the lease, some control over both the prices and quality of the provisions supplied. On the other hand, a profit has to be earned by the caterers over and above the gain accruing to the railway authorities. The competition in facilities which is so important a factor in British railway working—competition in rates having been abandoned by mutual agreement—tends to make the commissariat a branch of the advertising department, in the sense that the line with the best reputation for looking after the creature comforts of its customers gets "a pull" over its competitors. This is the main reason why, where competition is most keen—*e.g.*, in the case of the lines running northwards from London—we find all the companies doing their own catering. Whether it pays or not is a secondary consideration. The main thing is that the standard of comfort must be high.

THIRD-CLASS DINING-CAR, GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Excellence in the commissariat department not only diverts traffic from a rival route, but it also creates business for a non-competitive railway. At a very urgent summons a man will travel hundreds of miles without food, or will content himself with "battening on buns"; but a very large proportion of the travel over our railways is of choice rather than of necessity; and the fact that

Photo by] [*C. Pilkington.*

INTERIOR OF KITCHEN-CAR, GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

one can breakfast, lunch, or dine on the train often turns the scale in favour of going oneself instead of trusting to correspondence to achieve the end desired. Thus it is that the restaurant-car, first adopted on competitive routes in order to "steal a march" upon a rival railway, is now coming into general vogue on all long-distance trains, the Great Western and the South-Western — much of whose traffic is non-competitive — having recently followed the lead of the northern companies in providing accommodation for taking meals *en route*, whilst northern lines like the North-Eastern, who have the monopoly of certain districts, do not confine their restaurant-car trains to competitive routes.

Photo by] [*C. Pilkington.*

KITCHEN OF DINING-CAR DEPÔT, EUSTON STATION, LONDON, L. AND N. W. R.

A good example of a railway company which has been quick to recognise the traffic-making power of the restaurant-car is the Great Eastern. In the case of the Harwich Boat Expresses — which are amongst the finest dining-trains in the United Kingdom — competition with other routes to the Continent was no doubt the predominant factor; but the restaurant-cars on the Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Norwich, and Cromer services — which allow a passenger to breakfast on the "up" and dine on the "down" journey — are genuine traffic-developers, the more praiseworthy because the towns thus linked with the Metropolis are not comparable in importance with those to serve which the restaurant-cars of most of the other lines have been put on. Even little Clacton-on-Sea has its weekly "supper-train" on Saturday nights, enabling Clactonians to visit the London theatres, and theatrical folk to spend the Sunday at "Sunny Clacton." In this connection a word of praise should also be given to the Irish railway companies, who have shown the same kind of enterprise on comparatively thinly populated routes. They have done wonders, too, in improving the hotel accommodation of Ireland — once a byword, but now the theme of praise, amongst tourists.

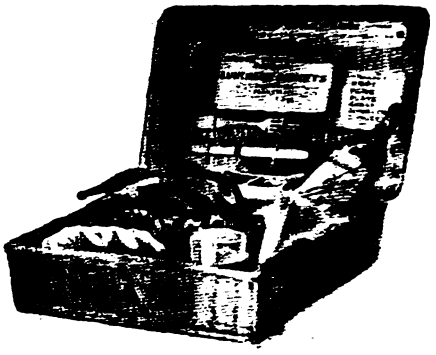
The introduction of dining-cars on the railways of the United Kingdom dates from November, 1879, when the Great Northern introduced on its London-Leeds service the first vehicle of the kind seen in this country — thereby "going one better" than the

Photo by] [*C. Pilkington.*

LINEN-ROOM OF DINING-CAR DEPÔT, EUSTON STATION, LONDON, L. AND N. W. R.

Midland, which had imported "Pullmans" from America five years earlier, with "drawing-room" and sleeping accommodation, but equipped for serving only the lightest of refreshments. The Midland followed suit by putting dining-cars on its London-Leeds service in 1882; and shortly afterwards the London and North-Western, Midland, and Great Northern all introduced similar accommodation on their London-Manchester services. The 5.45 p.m. out of King's Cross is the lineal descendant of the first dining-car train run in this country.

As the journey between London and Leeds



LUNCHEON-BASKET, L. AND N. W. R.

Photo by [*C. Pilkington.*

STORE-ROOM OF DINING-CAR DEPÔT, EUSTON STATION, LONDON, L. AND N. W. R.

or Manchester occupies less than half the time taken between the Metropolis and Glasgow or Edinburgh, one might have supposed the Anglo-Scotch services would have been the first to receive the convenience of dining *en route*. That the adoption of restaurant-cars on the three main routes between London and Scotland did not take place until 1893, and that even after that date for a number of years some of the principal trains ran without such accommodation, is attributable to the "vested interests" of the refreshment-rooms at Preston, York, and Normanton, respectively, where, ever since the openings of these several routes, travellers had been allowed time to take midday dinner before resuming the journey. I do not mean "vested interest" in the same literal sense as had to be overcome by the Great Western at Swindon, where an agreement had been made with a catering company to stop all trains for at least ten minutes for refreshments, the term of the arrangement being for ninety-nine years from 1842. At the end of fifty years the Great Western

Photo by [*C. Pilkington.*

TEA-WAGON, L. AND N. W. R.

authorities found this compulsory stopping an intolerable obstruction to their long-distance traffic, and accordingly, in 1895, they bought out the Swindon Junction Hotel Co., the price paid being a refund of its original capital—£100,000—and now have about twenty-five restaurant-cars running on their system.

Photo by [*Welch.*

SLIEVE DONARD HOTEL, NEWCASTLE, CO. DOWN.

This hotel, the largest in Ireland, is owned and worked by the Belfast and County Down Railway Company.

No such extravagant arrangement had been made by any of the northern lines, but they had invested considerable sums in very spacious dining-rooms at the stations I have mentioned, and they were naturally reluctant to throw these to a large extent out of use by introducing dinner on the train. Moreover, a meal hurriedly taken during a compulsory stop of twenty minutes or half an hour is a much more profitable thing to the caterer than one enjoyed at leisure in a well-appointed restaurant-car. In the one case the passenger is usually only too glad to spend as much time as possible over his eating and drinking; in the other, an over-hasty attempt to swallow a basin of hot soup—the invariable commencement of these platform meals—often put a hungry traveller out of action so far as the rest of the *menu* was concerned; or if he, or she, did at length get settled down to something more solid, the clang of the porter's bell, and the hoarse cry of "Take your seats, please!" from the guard,

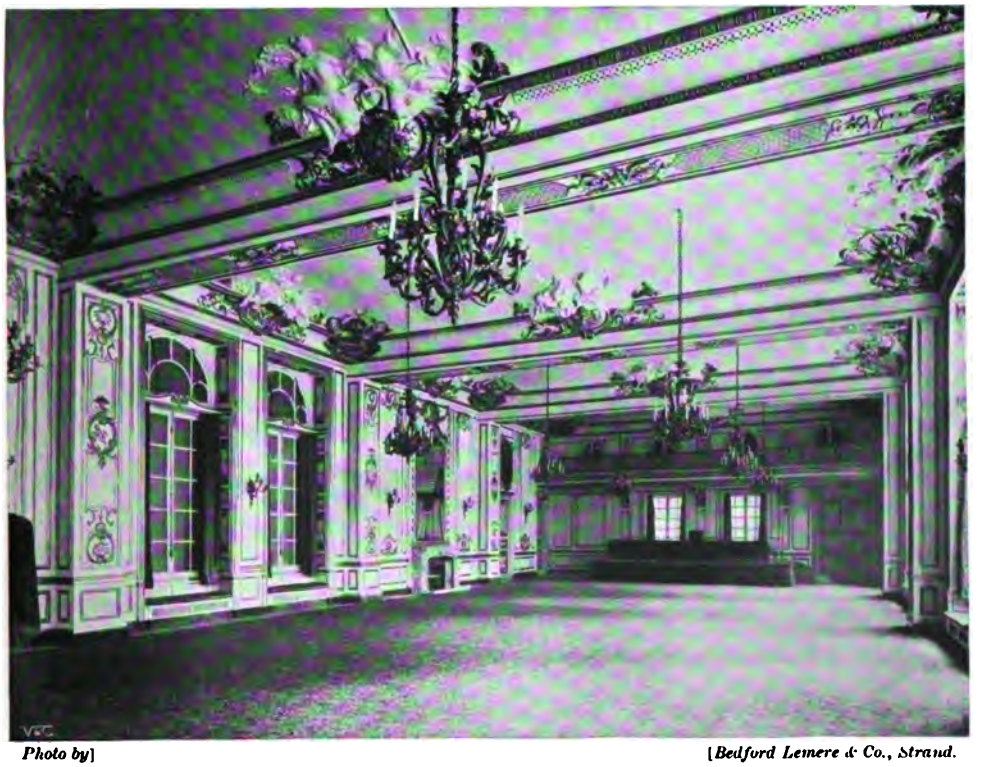


Photo by [*Bedford Lemere & Co., Strand.*

HAMILTON HALL, LIVERPOOL STREET HOTEL, LONDON, G. E. R.

prevented all but the most experienced from doing anything like justice to the viands. Thus it was decidedly a self-denying ordinance to the commissariat departments of certain of the companies when the fiat went forth that the twenty or thirty minutes' stop at York or Normanton or Preston was to become a thing of the past, and that the meals required by the through Anglo-Scotch passengers were in future to be provided in restaurant-cars. These were the first dining-saloons to be provided for the third-class, penny-a-mile passengers.

gers book their places for meals at specified times, and at the appointed hour they are conducted by an attendant along the corridor to the restaurant-car, which they vacate as soon as their meal is finished, in favour of the next batch of hungry customers. But, of course, such an arrangement is only possible on a long journey, and when the majority of the passengers are going "through." Given those conditions, it is, to my mind, a much better plan than allowing passengers to take seats in the "car" at the start of the journey. It is, no doubt, possible to pack more people

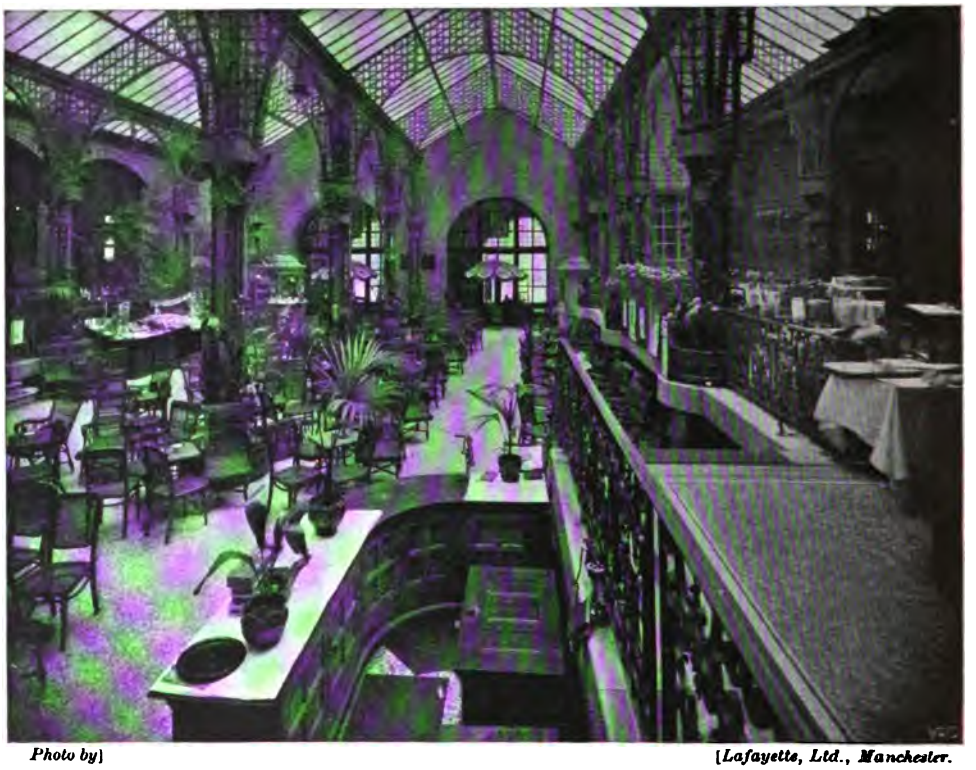


Photo by [*Lafayette, Ltd., Manchester.*

WINTER GARDEN AND GRILL-ROOM, MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

The provision of restaurant accommodation for all classes of passengers was greatly facilitated by the invention of the corridor train—a type of railway rolling-stock which originated in this country, and which is gradually coming into universal use amongst us for long journeys, whereas the American "Pullman" has withered on British soil. Even the Midland authorities have now been converted to faith in the "corridor." Thanks to this and the vestibule connection between the cars, the use of the restaurant-car on some of the longer routes nearly resembles that of a dining-saloon on a vessel. Passen-

into the train under the latter arrangement, but the former permits a larger number to be fed in comfort, and with a smaller plant and staff.

Where the distances are shorter—and the practice of putting restaurant-cars on comparatively short-distance trains is increasing every year—it is often necessary to provide accommodation for feeding a large number of passengers simultaneously. This is the case on the Harwich Boat Express, which leaves Liverpool Street at 8.30 every evening, and returns from Parkeston Quay at 6.30 the next morning. The "down" journey occu-

Photo by] [*Lafayette, Ltd., Manchester.*

THEATRE AND CONCERT-HALL, MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

pies one hour and twenty-five minutes, and the "up" journey an hour and a half, so that there is barely sufficient time to serve two relays of meals. Accordingly, the train is arranged with table accommodation for no less than a hundred and eleven passengers at one time—forty-seven in the first-class, and sixty-four in the second. Dinners or breakfasts for all these people are served simultaneously from a kitchen seventeen feet long and six feet six inches broad, placed in the centre of the middle car of the three composing the restaurant section of the train. Similarly the London and South-Western on its West of England restaurant-trains can feed seventy-seven passengers simultaneously — *viz.*, twenty-four first-class, twenty-two second-class, and thirty-one third-class—all the meals being served from a single centre kitchen.

To the uninitiated it seems wonderful that these little travelling kitchens, manned by a single *chef* with one assistant, can turn out

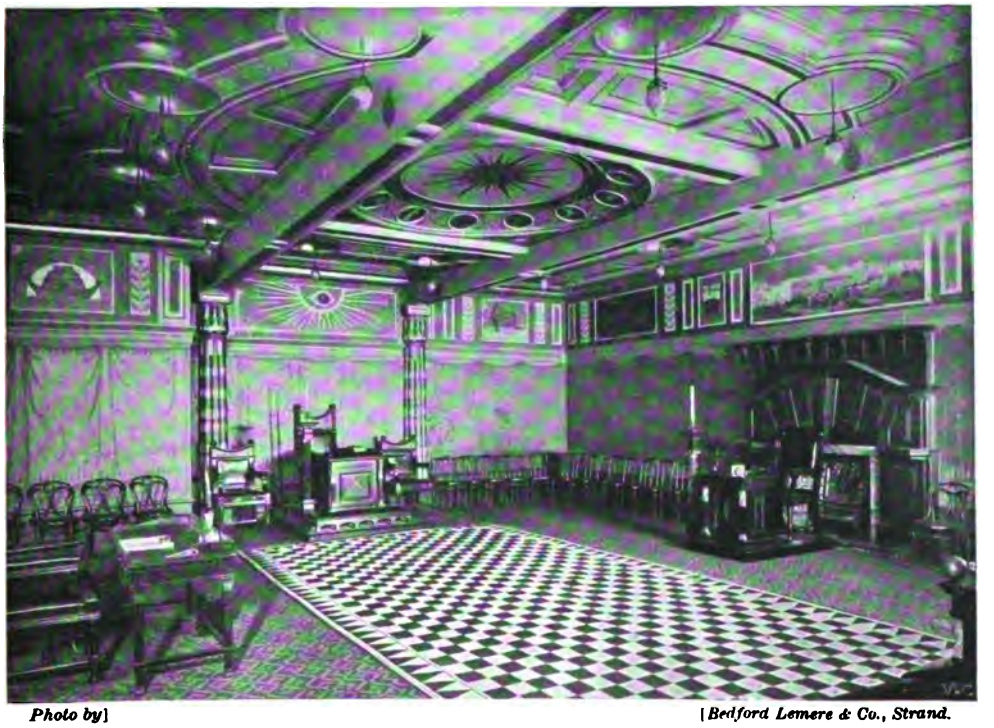


Photo by] [*Bedford Lemere & Co., Strand.*

MASONIC TEMPLE, LIVERPOOL STREET HOTEL, LONDON, G. E. R.

the amount of work they do. It is no uncommon thing for one hundred meals to be served simultaneously from a single kitchen, class or classes. As already explained, the aim of the commissariat department, where the traffic is competitive, is to make the catering a "draw" by doing everything in the best style. If this high standard is to be maintained, it is not desirable to serve more than sixty passengers at once; otherwise the food gets cold before it reaches those seated farthest from the kitchen. Moreover, the attendants—usually limited to two, or at most three, for each car—have their work cut out to get the meal through within the time allotted, a five-course dinner having, in some cases, to be served within the space of less than three-quarters of an hour—*i.e.*, the time occupied in the run between two important stopping-stations. And not only must the meal be got through, but—a most important matter—the bills

Photo by Lafayette, Ltd., Manchester.

POST-OFFICE, MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

and the Great Eastern have a "record" of 226 breakfasts provided for a "beanfeast" party, the restaurant-car equipment being similar to that of the Harwich Boat Express above described, and the passengers being served in two relays.

Generally speaking, the restaurant-trains of the leading lines provide for the simultaneous feeding of fifty or sixty people in the proportion of one-third first-class and two-thirds "third" (or "second" and "third"). The first-class car is generally a "composite," and contains the kitchen, being connected at that end with the other car, which is entirely devoted to the accommodation of the lower

Photo by [*The Commercial Photographic Co.*

IRONING-ROOM, WILLESDEN LAUNDRY, L. AND N. W. R.

must be made out and collected, which is no light task for the head attendant. In the bustle of alighting at their destination, not a few passengers would get out without paying for their meal, unless respectfully reminded of their debt, whilst there are others who would not scruple to evade payment were the attendant not on the alert to collect all dues as the train slows down.

No less alertness, though of a different kind, is required of the *chef* in the kitchen. A man of method is he, scrupulously clean and orderly, and with an expert eye to measure his supplies, so that an unexpected demand may not find him unprepared. On the primitive dining-cars, coal-fires were used in the travelling kitchens, but now gas-stoves are the universal rule, the supply of compressed oil-gas being carried in a cylinder under the floor of the car. Formerly the same kind of gas was generally employed also for the lighting of restaurant-cars, but this has lately been largely superseded by electric light, generated from the axle of the vehicle. Even in the kitchens, electric light is now common; and in the more modern cars, very special attention is paid to ventilation, thereby greatly improving the lot of the *chefs*, who in the older vehicles suffered considerably from heat and want of air. Generally the stove is placed transversely across the car, but in the latest Midland design its position is longitudinal, with the corridor behind it. This affords greater width for the culinary operations, whilst allowing for a free passage past the kitchen. On the restaurant-cars of the London and North-Western Railway Company, including the West Coast Joint vehicles (in which the Caledonian is partner with the North-Western), over half-a-million meals are served annually—breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, and teas.

The greater part of the food consumed on restaurant-cars is cooked in the travelling kitchens, joints and poultry being roasted or boiled, chops cut off and grilled, vegetables prepared, and fish boiled or fried whilst the train is running at sixty miles an hour. This fact is a striking tribute to the smoothness of British railway running, but, of course, the trains oscillate a good deal when crossing complicated junctions or descending steep gradients. Under such circumstances the frying or boiling of fish presents no small difficulty, on account of the liability of the boiling water or fat to spill. The one *chef*, too, has to pass repeatedly from the cooking of fish to meat and vegetables, and *vice versâ*, and he must be most careful to wash his hands each time, so that the flavours may not become mixed. Taking all the conditions into account, it is wonderful what perfection of cooking is attained.

Photo by] [*The Commercial Photographic Co.*

DRYING-ROOM, WILLESDEN LAUNDRY, L. AND N. W. R.

Soup, pastry, and sweets generally are made beforehand, and here comes in one of the advantages of railway companies being also hotel proprietors at their principal stations, the hotel kitchens being available for the pre-preparation of the meals served on the trains. In the case, however, of two of the companies—the North-Western and Great Northern, whose London hotels are not quite so close to the platforms as those at St. Pancras, Liverpool Street, and Paddington—it has been found necessary to provide

special depôts at the London termini for the restaurant-car business, the one at King's Cross being under a portion of the main departure platform, whilst the Euston depôt is an overhead building overlooking the departure side of that station. Both these depôts comprise kitchens, larders, and store-rooms of various kinds, as well as offices for the bookkeepers, storekeepers, and other clerks employed in connection with the travelling restaurants. When luncheon or dinner has to be served immediately after the departure of the train from London, the food is all cooked in these platform kitchens, and all the *chef* on the car has to do is to "dish it up," to use the phrase commonly employed in the home circle. The store-rooms of these depôts overflow with groceries, crockery, linen, and many other articles for the supply both of the cars and the refreshment-rooms. The Lancashire and Yorkshire has a similar depôt at its Exchange Station, Liverpool; for, although the company has an excellent hotel there, its manager of hotels and refreshment-rooms finds it better to keep the working of the two branches of his department separate as far as possible. On many railways, however, the hotels are used as "feeders" for both refreshment-rooms and restaurant-cars, and there is often a large bakery attached to one or more of the hotels, from which bread is supplied throughout the system. At Liverpool Street Hotel the Great Eastern bakes not only bread, but pastry, for the refreshment-rooms down the line, the supply being despatched every morning by the newspaper-trains. The North-Western bakes at Rugby, and the Great Northern at Peterborough, for both bread and pastry, whilst the former has also a fancy-bread bakery at Euston Hotel, which has the reputation for turning out the best Vienna rolls in London. The Lancashire and Yorkshire used to bake for itself, but has abandoned the practice as uneconomical on a comparatively short railway.

An important feature of British railway commissariat is the supply of luncheon-, dinner-, and tea-baskets to passengers on trains to which restaurant-cars are not attached. Prior to the introduction of such cars on the London and South-Western, no less than 60,000 luncheon-baskets were sold annually by Messrs. Spiers and Pond on that railway alone, and the number is still very large. The meals thus served may seem somewhat dear as compared with those taken on the cars; but the immense wastage inevitable with baskets must be taken into account—not of food, but of crockery, knives, glasses, cruets, etc. Many passengers are extremely careless as to replacing such articles in the baskets after use, while the opportunities for dishonesty are many and obvious. Another typical British feature in connection with railway refreshments is the tea-wagon, the advent of which under the carriage window brings solace to the many nervous travellers who shrink from that hurried plunge into the refreshment-room and out again, in which other travellers—I am not now speaking specially of the *bonâ-fide* variety—seem to find actual delight. In this connection a word of praise must be given to the cosy tea-rooms instituted within recent years at many large stations for the accommodation of ladies and others, thereby enabling these to escape the atmosphere of alcohol in which the aforesaid *bonâ-fide* traveller revels; nor should approval be withheld from the action of the North-Western and other railways in reducing the price of a cup of tea to 2*d.* in their second- and third-class rooms, thus making "the cup that cheers" as cheap as a glass of beer and cheaper than spirits. The North-Western also has a most praiseworthy rule that *employés* of the company may go into the lower class rooms and get a cup of tea for a penny. By the way, all the barmaids employed on this system are daughters or other relatives of the male servants of the company.

The provision of hotels by railway companies in the United Kingdom dates from very early in their history, and the total number thus owned at the present time cannot be far short of one hundred, including the most complete hotel in Europe, the Midland at Manchester, the largest in Scotland, the North British Station Hotel, Edinburgh, and the largest in Ireland, the Slieve Donard at Newcastle, co. Down, the last-named belonging to the little Belfast and County Down Railway Company. In London, the Midland "Grand" and the Great Eastern "Liverpool Street" stand well up in the list for size in a city of mammoth hostelries, whilst for comfort all the terminal hotels of the Metropolis have high reputations, notably the Euston and the Great Northern. By reason of its fine halls, the Cannon Street Hotel of the South-Eastern Railway Company has long been a favourite *locale* for company meetings and other important "City" gatherings, as well as for dinners, concerts, dances, and social functions generally. A bold bid for the same kind of business has recently been made by the Great Eastern in respect

of the "Hamilton Hall" and "Abercorn Rooms" recently added to the Liverpool Street Hotel. This splendid suite of apartments includes a Masonic Temple, elaborately decorated in Egyptian style. The immediate vicinity of a great railway station is a most convenient place for gatherings of all kinds, and the Liverpool Street Hotel has the advantage of being served by no less than three railways—the Great Eastern, North London, and Metropolitan.

In connection with the construction or enlargement of their stations in great cities, railway companies come into possession of central sites of unique character, upon which there is commonly room for the erection of a good deal more than premises for the reception and despatch of trains. The temptation to add a hotel to the plans is obvious, and it is not often resisted. Additional Parliamentary powers have, of course, to be obtained, but the Legislature regards hotel-keeping by railway companies as being in the public interest, and undoubtedly this opinion is borne out by results. Whether it is always in the shareholders' interests is another question, and one which, as before explained, it is impossible to decide conclusively; but that an additional stimulus is given both to travel and to commerce by the existence of well-appointed railway hotels goes without saying. It is estimated that during last year some 40,000 people slept at the "Midland," at Manchester, who would not otherwise have spent a night in that city. They were attracted thither by the unrivalled combination of attractions offered by that hotel—a combination which must be seen to be believed, and which is but faintly depicted in some of the illustrations to this article. In addition to attaching visitors to the town, and prolonging and increasing the visits of buyers of Manchester goods, the hotel has supplied a real social want of the residents in Manchester and district—forming, as it does, a refined and almost extravagantly beautiful centre for the multifarious social activities of a population much of whose daily life is necessarily spent in surroundings which are sordid by contrast.

Photo by] [*Lafayette, Ltd., Manchester.*

AMERICAN BAR, MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

The "Midland" at Manchester is unlike any other hotel in England at the present time, and the ramifications of its business are bewildering. The following are some

statistics contributed by the company's hotels' manager, Mr. Towle, to a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian* :—

We have a staff of 380 servants, and pay £24,000 a year in wages. We serve 400 meals in the grill-room every day, and 500 meals in the French restaurant—these latter at an average of 10*s.* per head—every week. Between 400 and 500 people obtain refreshment every day from the American bar, and quite half of these are American "temperance" drinks. In the German restaurant there are sold in a year 80,000 special German dishes and 500,000 portions of German Lager beer. The Turkish bath is visited by 180 people every week, and the hairdresser's shop by 500 customers. Our own bakers make for the hotel 3,000 separate portions of bread every day; and in one year our own laundry-lists numbered 1,500,000 articles. Ours, I think, is the only complete sub-post-office in a hotel in this country. We despatch and receive in one year 50,000 telegrams and a million telephone messages. There are 500 telephone instruments in the hotel. In twelve months we issued postal orders and money orders to the value of £5,000, we sold £2,500 worth of postage-stamps, and we issued nearly one hundred Savings' Bank-books. There are 7,200 electric lights in the building. Electricity costs £6,500 a year, and gas £100 a month. These are a few miscellaneous figures taken at random from our first year's return. I could quote many more, but perhaps these will suffice to show that the business of the Midland Hotel is of a very exceptional character, and its future welfare a matter in which the general public of Manchester, as well as the shareholders of the Midland Railway, have at any rate a parallel interest.

Outside the great cities, our railway companies have a large number of hotels erected or acquired for various purposes. Those which may be classified as "junction hotels" date from the time when railway travelling was less expeditious than it is at present, and when it was more often necessary to "break the journey" for the night. Thus the picturesque Park Hotel, Preston, which belongs jointly to the London and North-Western and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies, was intended to serve as a stopping-place for the night for passengers passing between London and Scotland by the West Coast route, and also for Anglo-Irish passengers travelling *viâ* Fleetwood. But the running of sleeping-cars on the trains, and the great improvements made in the Irish cross-Channel boats, have resulted in the large proportion of the travellers by both these routes travelling through by night instead of breaking the journey, and thus, in this case, as in that of the platform dining-rooms already mentioned, the railway companies have been penalised by their own progress. On the other hand, the great ease of travelling at the present day has made it possible for railway companies to invest money profitably in another class of hotel—*viz.*, those which have been erected so plentifully in recent years at seaside and other pleasure resorts for the accommodation of tourists and holiday-makers. In connection with the growth of the popularity of golf, an opportunity has arisen for the encouragement of railway travelling amongst the well-to-do classes of the community by the development of new golfing resorts, and in such cases the railway companies have thought it a good investment not only to provide hotels, but also to lay out links in connection therewith, and to organise tournaments and championship matches by way of advertising their enterprises. The Great North of Scotland Railway Company at Cruden Bay, the Glasgow and South-Western at Turnberry, the Belfast and County Down at Newcastle (co. Down), and the London and North-Western at Greenore, are instances which occur to me of combined hotel-and-golf-course enterprises on the part of railway companies, and probably half-a-dozen others at least could be mentioned.

In conclusion, a few words should be said as to the organisation of the commissariat department of a great railway. Generally the whole business—hotels, restaurant-cars, and refreshment-rooms—is placed under the charge of a head-manager, with offices at headquarters, and a number of assistants located at the principal centres. The appointment obviously requires very great talent for organisation, and special knowledge as to all matters appertaining to food and drink and the comfort of guests, as well as a strong physique to stand the wear and tear of the constant travelling necessary to keep in touch with all the ramifications of the department. In addition to all the things already mentioned, the commissariat manager of a large railway generally has several laundries under his charge, for the washing of the linen of the company and its guests. The London and North-Western has no less than five laundries at various centres; and in connection with the one at Willesden, where the London washing (amounting to about 75,000 articles a week) is done, the North-Western keeps about 250 chickens and 100 pigs—the former to supply eggs for the Euston Hotel, and the latter to convert the waste food of the hotel and restaurant-cars into pork. In a few cases the buying of the wines—a work requiring special skill and judgment—is not done by the commissariat manager, but by an outside expert. But as a general rule the manager supervises the buying as well as the selling of everything. Skilful buying is, in short, the basis of success in the caterer's business.

THE LADY'S MAID.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN*

Author of "The Garden of Lies."

MR. MAITLAND'S ill-humour began early in the evening, but was of the sort best described as cumulative. The night was cold and wet. He had dined at Martin's with Jimmy Ross, and there was something very wrong with the *sauce bearnaise* of the *filet mignon*—which is enough to upset anybody's temper. Then, after dinner, they went into the *café* for their coffee and cigarettes, and a noisy crowd of inebriates settled about the next table. After that Maitland quarrelled with Jimmy Ross about what theatre they should go to. He wished to hear a certain musical piece at Daly's, but Jimmy Ross had already heard it twice and refused to go again. He said it was rotten, anyhow, and wished to compromise on the French Maids' Ball up in Harlem.

So when they came to a deadlock, and at length strolled morosely in the rain up the Avenue to the Portland, where Maitland had chambers, that young man was quite unfit for human intercourse.

They found Coriolanus asleep before the fire on a little pile of carefully selected blue silk pyjamas which he had meant to worry after his nap.

He rose politely at their entrance and would have made himself agreeable, but Maitland spoke to him with marked rudeness and threw a crushed opera-hat at him, which, when Coriolanus would have made merry with it, burst into bloom, as it were, with the pop of a champagne-cork, and drove the astonished dog into a far corner in yelps of rage and resentment.

"You go to bed in my pyjamas again," said Mr. Maitland pleasantly, "and I'll give you curvature of the spine with your own leading-strap!"

"That's what pyjamas are for," argued Jimmy Ross, "goin' to bed in. The poor dog hasn't any of his own, and he's forced to borrow. I think you're very unreasonable, if you should ask me."

He wandered in an undecided fashion about the room for a while, thoughtfully filling his cigarette-case from a box on the tobacco-stand, and at last, since there seemed to be no moderation of the gloom, shook his head and made for the door.

"I'm off," he said. "If you're determined to be peevish, I'll have none of you. I'm going to call on some very nice people, and I shall tell them that I left you throwing the bric-à-brac about in a fit of rage."

"Well, I'm glad you're going," said Mr. Maitland from the divan. "I commenced reading a very dull novel yesterday, and I think I'd rather finish it than listen to your prattle. But I don't believe you're going to call on any nice people," he added, as Jimmy Ross opened the door. "You are going to that French Ball."

Then, when Jimmy Ross had gone, he lighted a pipe and got himself into a loose smoking-jacket—a certain quilted-silk atrocity of Japanese misconstruction; and since, upon inspection, the very dull novel induced only a sensation of fatigue, he pulled a great armchair before the fire and settled down in it, feet outstretched to the twisted andirons.

It seemed to him very warm and cosy and comfortable. The grate had been filled with coal not more than half an hour before, and the fire was just making its way to the top. It was good for a long time. Mr. Maitland could not remember when he had been so filled with a lazy, contented sense of well-being, for he was seldom alone, and little given to sitting before fires.

"A long, quiet snooze here by the fire, Coriolanus," he said, smiling gently. "Just a long, quiet snooze here by the fire. It's better sport than I'd known. I wouldn't go out to anybody's theatre now, not I. And I wouldn't go out to anybody's French Ball, either. I don't mean to stir for a long while."

Coriolanus, judging by the smile that he had been forgiven in the matter of the blue silk pyjamas, came over and lay down between his master's outstretched feet, and Maitland nudged him good-humouredly in the ribs with the toe of his boot. He was thinking, with a sort of mild pity, of the misguided Jimmy Ross, whom he believed to be on his way to the haunts of frivolity, and

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of the thousands of other restless people down below in the wet streets who were dashing about so feverishly to theatres and opera and such, in the belief that it was fun. He was quite certain that he would not change places with any of them, and felt a little resentful because he had never before discovered this extraordinarily pleasant fashion of spending an evening.

The fire glowed white and pink and deep crimson. Sometimes there were tiny explosions, with a shower of sparks, at which Coriolanus growled threateningly; or the whole mass settled lower in its basket with a soft rattle, as if it stirred in its sleep. And Mr. Maitland, drawing lazily at his pipe, saw faces there among the coals—sweet, half-forgotten faces of which he had, somehow, seemed not to have the time to think, for a long while.

Some of them made him smile, and some of them made him sigh, and some—if he had dared—bade fair to make him weep. He had quite forgotten Jimmy Ross and his own ill-humour.

It was three pipes later—an hour, perhaps—when something roused him from his half-doze. It seemed to him that there was a noise at one of the windows of the farther room.

"It's only the rain, I expect," he said drowsily, and turned his eyes back to the glowing fire. Then Coriolanus raised an alert head and growled.

"D'you hear it, too?" said Mr. Maitland. "Oh, well, come along, then. We'll have a look. It's only the rain, I tell you."

He made his way into the other room, blinking and stumbling over the chairs, and went to the window. Now, Maitland's chambers were in the sixth storey of the Portland, and the windows of all save the front room looked out over the roofs of a long row of the old-fashioned, five-storey, brown-stone houses common to New York. Beyond this row of seven or eight houses towered another high structure, like the Portland, but given over to very luxurious studio suites for fortunate painters whose prestige was based on teas and dances rather than on canvases. Mr. Maitland's windows, like those of the sixth storey of the studio building beyond, not only looked out over these flat roofs, but were so near them that one might step into or out of a window without great difficulty.

"There's somebody out there, Coriolanus," said Mr. Maitland. "Maybe he's a burglar; but, anyhow, let's have him in." The dog set his paws on the window-ledge and growled, but Maitland loosed the catch of the window and threw it up. Then, after a moment, he bent forward with a sudden little cry.

"Heavens!" he said, "it's a woman!"

The woman was half sitting, half kneeling on the wet roof outside, and she had laid her arms against the window-ledge and hidden her face upon them. She did not speak or raise her head when the window was thrown open, but Maitland, as he bent over, could hear her sobbing very quietly to herself. At the sound of his voice she looked up.

"May I—come in?" she asked simply. "May I—come in? I'm very—cold and wet." She tried to stand up, but her foot caught in her twisted skirt, and she would have fallen but for Maitland's arm.

"Turn around just a bit, please," said he. "So!" He braced one knee on the window-ledge and leaned farther out into the rain. He put both arms about the woman as she knelt there—about her shoulders and about her knees—and lifted her into the room, with Coriolanus barking encouragingly from the rear. Then he carried her through to the other room and set her down in the big chair before the fire.

"Why, it's only a girl!" he cried, when he saw her face in the firelight, "just a little girl!"—which was hardly true, for she might have been anywhere between sixteen and twenty.

She would seem to have told the truth about being very cold and wet. The water stood in drops and streaks on her skirt and on the long, thin cloak which she wore, and locks of her hair hung down across her cheeks. Maitland's own cheek was wet where the hair had brushed it. She sat huddled in a corner of the great chair, shivering a little, with closed eyes—Maitland unconsciously noting the length of the eyelashes—and her breath caught, now and then, in a half-sob.

"Oh, I say!" begged Mr. Maitland, "please don't—don't faint away, or anything like that, you know. Wait a moment!" He poured some cordial from a decanter into a little glass. "Just you drink a drop of this," said he. "You're shivering." The girl shook her head, but Maitland slipped an arm about her shoulders and held the glass to her lips with the other hand.

"You've got to drink it!" he insisted. "My word! D'you suppose I want you to die of pneumonia, or something, here on my hands? Drink it all! That's good." He

stood on the hearthrug, smiling cheerfully down at her, and the girl ventured upon a timid little attempt at a smile in return—a poor, forlorn little attempt.

"Oh, we shall have you all ship-shape in

"'Heavens!' he said, 'it's a woman!'"

no time!" declared Maitland. "Shan't we, Coriolanus? Eh! what? We must do something about those wet things of yours, first, though. I'll just see what——" He left her alone for a moment, and the girl heard him stirring about in the farther rooms. Then directly he returned.

"I've made lights in the sleeping-room and bath beyond, there," he said. "And I've put out a sort of fool dressing-gown and bed-slippers and all that sort of thing, you know. D'you suppose you can manage with them while we're drying your shoes and—and anything else that's wet? I'll wait here for you to change. If you don't find everything you want, call out."

The girl rose to her feet and stood looking up into Mr. Maitland's face. Maitland drew a quick little breath when he met her eyes; she was a remarkably pretty girl, even with her wet hair down over her cheeks, and her wet garments hanging ungracefully about her.

"How do you—dare trust me in there?" she said. "How do you know I'm not a thief? How do you know this isn't just what I came here for—to steal?"

Mr. Maitland turned his eyes away with an embarrassed little laugh.

"Oh, that's all right," said he. "I'll risk that right enough. If you want to steal, you'll find a number of silver things on the dressing-table, and, I dare say, some money. I usually leave it about. There's a door opening from the sleeping-room into the outside corridor. You could get away by that." He laughed at her cheerfully, standing before the fire with his hands in the pockets of the Japanese smoking-jacket; but the girl stood looking at him very soberly for a little space. Then she turned without speaking and went across the room and through the one beyond, and Maitland heard the door of the sleeping-room close behind her.

After she had gone, he faced the perturbed Coriolanus for some time in a frowning silence.

"I can't make it out," he said at last. "Hang me if I can make it out! What would a pretty, young girl like that be doing out on the roofs at night—and raining, too? She had no hat, and that poor, little, thin cape-thing of hers was soaked through. I tell you I can't make it out. She's no thief," he went on presently, still scowling across the hearthrug at the attentive Coriolanus—"not with that face. She couldn't be. Well, then, what the dickens is she?" He went into the next room and stood by the window, staring across the wet housetops towards the big studio building beyond. Suddenly it occurred to him that the girl might have come from there—but why?

He went slowly back to the hearthrug and dropped down in the big chair.

"And what are we going to do with her?" he demanded. "She can't stop here, you know—unless I go somewhere else, that is. It's very rum! Heavens! how Jimmy Ross'll curse when he finds out what he has missed!"

Coriolanus rolled a scandalised eye towards the closed door of the sleeping-room and, after a moment's hesitation, started off on a tour of investigation.

"Come back here!" said Maitland sharply. Coriolanus came to a reluctant halt on the threshold.

"Come back here!" said his master again. "Why, she's—she's changing her things, you ass! I'm surprised at you. Come here and sit down. Haven't you any delicacy at all?" And just then the sleeping-room door opened.

"Will this—be all—right?" said the girl timidly. Maitland broke into a laugh in spite of himself. She had put on the dressing-gown which he had laid out. It was a very gorgeous affair of Japanese silk, crimson, with golden dragons twisting about in a most intimidating fashion. It was so much too large that it dragged about her feet on the floor and made a train behind her. She had managed somehow to put up her hair very neatly. Maitland wondered where the hair-pins came from.

"Indeed you'll do!" said he. "You look exactly like a Japanese empress—or like a Japanese empress ought to look. You're very ornamental, I assure you. Now come back here by the fire. If you were out on those roofs long, you'd be chilled through."

"Do you mind my—my bringing these here?" ventured the girl—"to dry them, you know. There wasn't much heat in the radiators there in the sleep—in the other room." She held out her two little, water-soaked shoes in one hand and the thin, black cape in the other.

"Mind?" said he. "Mind? Bless you, no! Give them to me."

He spread the things out over the hearth-tiles, and pulled the big armchair nearer for the girl to sit in; but she dragged a pillow from the divan close by and curled up on that—as Turks and women can—thrusting out towards the fire one absurdly small and slender foot from which the commodious bed-slipper had dropped.

Maitland, in the armchair, watched her, smiling excitedly. It seemed to him such an extraordinarily good lark, such a grind on Jimmy Ross. He found himself looking forward to the girl's explanation with the deliberate, pleased expectancy of one who awaits the second act of a good play; but he had no wish to hasten the explanation, for it was quite entertaining enough to watch the unconsciously beautiful picture she made sitting there in that crimson *kimono* with gold dragons twisting and grinning where the firelight fell upon them. He wanted to tell her how much he was enjoying it all, and how very pretty she was, but of course that would never do while they were alone in his rooms.

"Well?" he said, after a bit. "Well?" for the girl remained a long time silent, staring into the fire and twisting her two hands nervously in her lap. She looked up for an instant to meet his eyes, and he saw that there were tears in her own, and that she was much more disturbed than she had seemed.

"You want to—to know about—me, of course," she said, and halted to steady her voice, for it was shaking, "and about what I was—doing at your window on the roof?"

"Don't tell if you'd rather not," said young Maitland.

"Oh! I—must!" cried the girl in a low tone. "I—must, of course. I—came from the Florentine—the studio building. They let upon the roofs just as yours do."

"Ah!" said Mr. Maitland, nodding. "That's what I thought you'd done."

"I—had to come," the girl went on, bending her head so that Maitland could not see her face. "I had to—get away quickly, very quickly, and—and I couldn't go by the doors. The doors of the room I was in were—locked."

"Ah!" said Mr. Maitland again.

"I didn't mean to come—here," she went on swiftly. "I thought I could—make my way down a fire-escape or something at the back of these low houses. There were fire-escapes there, but I—I didn't dare. They were so dark and slippery and all! So I—came here."

She looked up with a little, nervous laugh, but Mr. Maitland was staring straight ahead of him into the fire, and his face had turned grave.

"You say"—he questioned slowly—"that the doors of the room you were in were locked?"

"Why—yes," said she; "yes, they were—that is—yes, they were locked."

"Do you live in the Florentine?" he demanded.

"Yes," said the girl, very low. "Yes, I live there."

"Why, then," said Maitland, frowning anxiously at her, "then why in—I don't see what——" He broke off in the midst of his words. "Ah!" he said after a little, "maybe I—see. Look here, has someone been abusing you? Did someone lock you

"The women drew together and moved over towards the door."

up in that room, and did you climb out on the housetops in a cold rain because you were afraid to stop at home?" His jaw squared itself rather unpleasantly, and his eyebrows drew together.

"Yes," said the girl, turning her face away once more; "yes, that was it. I—was afraid to stop."

Mr. Maitland rose briskly from his chair, and there was a steady but not mirthful smile on his lips.

"That makes it all very simple," said he. "Now, I'm going to leave you in possession here for a bit. I have a call to make. Someone in the Florentine studios is going to have a bad half-hour. After I've seen—him, we'll talk over what is to be done about you. I'll take you to some of your friends, or something of that sort. Now, if you'll just give me the name and the number of the apartment, I'll be off."

He had caught up his great-coat from the chair where he had thrown it upon entering, and was pulling it on, quite unmindful of the Japanese smoking-jacket; but the girl rose to her feet and came to him swiftly, catching him by the arm. Her eyes were very wide and full of terror.

"Oh, no, no, you must not!" she cried sharply. "You must not go there! You—ah, you don't understand! It wouldn't do at all—oh, no, you must not go!" Her hands shook against his arm, but Maitland only smiled down into her frightened eyes and shook his head.

"You must let me go," said he gently. "Someone has been treating you very badly, and I want to put it right. You must let me go."

"I tell you," she cried again, "you don't understand! You must not go! Ah, let me explain! Let me explain all about it, and then—if you like, you can—turn me out into the—rain again. Nobody's been abusing me or—treating me badly. They locked me in that room while they sent for the—for the police. Ah! can't you see?"

Maitland dropped the great-coat to the floor at his feet, and he looked at the girl for a long time in silence.

"The—police?" he said at last.

"Oh, yes," said the girl dully, and turned away from him a little, "the police. I'd—stolen some things. I'm maid to one of the women—one of the ladies there in the Florentine, and I stole some rings. I was going away to-morrow, but they missed the rings earlier than I expected."

She moved slowly over to the hearthrug and dropped down upon the cushion where she had sat before. Her head and shoulders had taken on a forlorn and hopeless droop, but she did not weep or sob. And after a moment, Maitland also came back to his former place in the big armchair, Coriolanus hovering anxiously on the flank.

"Have you the—rings with you?" he asked presently in a dulled, expressionless tone.

"Yes," said the girl. "Oh, yes, here they are." She pulled open the neck of the crimson *kimono* and the collar of her gown underneath, and she untied a bit of narrow ribbon which encircled her neck, and put into Maitland's hand the two rings which had been upon it, together with a little flat gold locket. Her face was still turned away, drooping a bit, and she did not look up when she gave him the things, not even at Maitland's half-smothered exclamation.

It was not the rings which had made him cry out, but in taking the little locket from the girl's hand, his fingers had chanced to press the spring at its edge, so that it flew open, and a tiny but very recognisable likeness of his own features looked up at him with a photographic smile. He closed the locket and waited a moment till his voice was once more quite under control and colourless.

"You said, a few moments ago," he began, "that you were a lady's maid. Did you—take these things from your mistress?"

"Yes," said the girl, looking away still.

"Who is she?" he demanded.

"Carol—Miss Ross," said the girl. "Miss Carolin Ross. She's stopping for a month with some cousins of hers—the Reverleys, who live at the Florentine. Mr. Reverley is a painter—that is, he gives teas."

But Maitland had sprung to his feet with another exclamation, and was walking up and down the room, frowning and smiting his hands together softly.

"What did you tell me that for?" he cried. "What the—Carol Ross, of all people in the world! Ah! what did you tell me that for?"

The girl stumbled to her feet and stood on the hearthrug staring across the room at him. She held by one hand to the top of the big armchair, and her eyes were wide and excited.

"You—asked me," she said in a half-whisper. "Why? Do you mean that you know Car—Miss Ross? Do you mean that she is a friend of yours?"

Maitland came to a halt in the middle of the room.

"Know her?" he cried. "Of course I—why, that is, no, I—no, I don't know her, quite, I suppose. It's—rather odd. She's Jimmy Ross's cousin, and I've—I've been writing to her for months—it was a sort of lark. I've been writing to her from Paris, and to-morrow I'm to meet her. I've never seen her yet. Reverley's giving a tea, and I'm to meet her—Carol Ross, of all people!" He took up his walk once more, back and forth across the room, smiting his clenched hands together.

"What did you tell me for?" he cried again. "Why didn't you lie about it? Don't you see what a position you put me in? You steal things from—from *her*, and then come to me for protection! Don't you see how hard you're making it for me?"

The girl turned about towards the fire and put up her hands against the high mantelshelf, laying her face against them; and, after a time, Maitland came back to his big armchair and dropped into it heavily.

"Of course you didn't know," said he. "Naturally you didn't know. It was just a freakish turn of luck. Odd things happen sometimes. I've seen 'em." He turned the two rings and the little gold locket over and over in his hand, frowning down upon them, and all at once a thought seemed to strike him.

"Tell me," said he, "does this—did this locket, as well as the rings, belong to Miss Ross?"

"Yes," said the girl, not moving, "yes."

Then suddenly she turned about and dropped to her knees on the hearthrug, and caught at Mr. Maitland's arm with her two hands.

"Oh! are you going to give me in charge?" she cried swiftly, and her voice broke a little. "Are you going to turn me out into the rain? I know I deserve it; I know that, but couldn't you have a little pity for me? I—didn't mean to—steal, honestly I didn't. You don't know what such temptation is, sometimes. You don't know why I may have wanted money—*had* to have it! Are you going to have me arrested?"

"No," said Maitland, smiling down into her drawn face; "no, I'm not going to do that. You know, I couldn't do that. We'll fix the thing up somehow. These—things must be returned, of course. I'll see to that. I'll talk to Reverley in the morning And if you must have money—if that's why you—borrowed these things, I'll fix that, too. No, I couldn't give you in charge."

"Oh!" cried the girl, looking up into his face with wide, bright eyes. "Oh, you're—you're good! As I live, you're a gentleman, Mr. Maitland! There aren't too many of them."

"How did you know my name was Maitland?" he asked quickly, and it seemed to him that the girl's colour deepened a bit.

"I—knew who you must be when you—spoke of writing to Miss Carol," she said, and turned a little away from him, still crouching on the hearthrug near his feet. And she sat there for a long time, quite silent, smiling into the fire as if something pleased her.

But Maitland, from the depths of the big armchair, watched her with puzzled, frowning eyes. He had quite forgotten that the whole affair was a tremendously fine lark, with which he was to overwhelm the luckless Ross, later on.

He was thinking, with a sense of great pity, almost of resentment, of the position in which this girl had placed herself. It seemed to him so impossible that it could be true. She didn't seem at all that sort. She was such a pretty girl, and bore herself with just the indescribable air and poise of the girls he knew and drank tea with and sat out dances with in people's winter gardens. He could not fancy her stealing rings. It had never occurred to him particularly to take notice of ladies' maids, but he had not supposed they were so like their mistresses as this. The girl did not look as if she were in the habit of brushing other people's hair. Maitland glanced at the sharp, clean lines of her profile and at the sweep of her eyelashes, and at the poise of her head, and at the round, smooth whiteness of her throat where the *kimono* had been pulled away from it, and he turned a bit red as he realised that if he had met her at somebody's dance, he would have picked her out from the entire roomful of women, at once and without hesitation, as the most daintily beautiful of them all, and the one most likely to be interesting. He was so certain of this that the thought whimsically amused him as a rather good bit of satire upon one's social judgment.

"If only you hadn't stol—taken the things from *her!*" he said, and he did not know that he had spoken aloud. "If only you hadn't taken them from Carol!" The girl turned her face towards him again, but she did not seem particularly cast down by the realisation of her crime, for she was still smiling—almost tenderly. But before she could answer, there came from the outside a

sound of voices which brought them both to their feet.

Now, when Jimmy Ross had left the apartment, earlier in the evening, he had closed behind him the door of the study where Mr. Maitland sat, but had left open the door at the outer end of the little corridor which gave upon the hall near the elevator-shaft. The voices were approaching along this little corridor, and there were several of them. Maitland recognised Jimmy Ross's and the painter Reverley's and, he thought, Reverley's wife's. There were evidently several women in the party. He heard Jimmy Ross say—

"Oh, yes, he'll be here, I'm quite certain. He was in much too nasty a humour to have gone out anywhere. Wager you anything you like that he's asleep before the fire, with that dog of his between his feet. I say, strike a match, Reverley! I can't find the key." Then there was a rattling of keys on a key-chain. Jimmy Ross kept a key to the rooms.

Meanwhile, Maitland was talking rapidly into the girl's ear.

"Go into one of the other rooms as quickly as you can," he said. "It's that idiot Jimmy Ross, and he is bringing your own people along. You mustn't be seen. I'll get rid of them as soon as possible. Look sharp!"

But the girl seemed to have been stricken, all at once, helpless with terror, for she only stood shaking on the hearthrug, holding with one hand to the big armchair, and staring with wide, frightened eyes into Maitland's face.

"Look sharp!" he cried again. "Do you want to be found here?" He took her by one arm to drag her by main force from the room; but the girl, half crazed, it would seem, by fear, gave a little, smothered cry and, breaking away from his hold, darted behind a great Japanese screen which stood in one corner. Just then Jimmy Ross found the proper key and slid it into the lock. Mait-

"'Please listen—and don't interrupt. It's all a silly joke.'"

land had barely time to drop into his big armchair.

He struggled out of it again as the people came laughing and exclaiming into the room, and stood on the hearthrug, blinking at them with sleepy eyes.

"Oh! awf'ly glad to see you!" he said, with a half-yawning laugh of embarrassment, which was rather well executed. "I must have been — have been sleeping — beastly night—what?"

"You see?" cried Jimmy Ross. "What did I tell you he'd be doing? Didn't I tell you he'd be asleep? Lazy beggar!"

They were all people Maitland knew well, the Reverleys, and Mrs. Reverley's sister, who was a young widow, and another young married woman, who said her husband was at the French Ball. And they chaffed Maitland a great deal on being caught asleep at that hour, and on his wonderful smoking-jacket; but as he was shaking hands with Reverley, he saw that gentleman's gaze go over his shoulder to the hearth, and his eyebrows lift a little.

"'Fraid we've — er—interrupted a *tête-à-tête*," said Reverley. Maitland swung about and looked. He had quite forgotten the two little, water-soaked shoes, but they stood flagrantly and alone on the empty hearth-tiles. Maitland experienced, for an instant, that slight internal sinking sensation generally caused by the rapid descent of an elevator.

"Oh, yes—yes, *those!*" said he. "I—expect Coriolanus must have dragged those out from somewhere while I was—asleep. Silly little beast!" But even as he spoke he noted that two of the women had drawn a bit apart, and were talking in low tones, and looking oddly from the shoes to himself, and stealing glances about the room.

Jimmy Ross laughed shortly, but his eyes never left his chum's face, and they were full of a half-comic amazement. "Well, I'll be hanged!" he said.

"Not a doubt of it!" snapped Maitland, and he felt the flush that began to rise up over his cheeks.

Mrs. Reverley slightly accentuated the elevation which God had given her nose.

"Someone's got scent on!" said she. "Upon my word, it makes me think of my own Rose Velours!" She turned upon Maitland. "Do you use scent?" she demanded.

"Heavens, no!" cried the outraged Maitland.

"Odd!" said Mrs. Reverley, and stared at the two little shoes on the hearth.

Then Reverley, among whose good points tact did not seem to figure, conceived it would be an excellent lark to search the apartment for the supposititious proprietor of the little shoes, and his idea met with universal approval—almost universal, that is.

"Oh, go right on!" said Maitland desperately. "Don't mind me. You may look in all the closets, and in the drawers of my chiffonier. Jimmy will make lights for you. It seems a very jolly way of spending an evening, doesn't it?"

But one of the women—it was Mr. Reverley's sister—moved a little forward, watching Maitland's face.

"Then shall we commence with this room?" she asked; and it seemed to Maitland that there was a sort of suppressed excitement in her voice. "Shall we look beyond that screen yonder?" she said, and went towards it.

Mr. Maitland reached the screen first, and turned his back to it, facing the little knot of people.

"No," said he, smiling gently. "You mustn't look there." One of the women gave a sudden, amazed cry, and from behind him Maitland heard the girl in the shelter of the screen catch her breath sharply.

Then Jimmy Ross came forward and put out a hand upon his chum's shoulder. His lips were still drawn into a smile, but his eyes were very grave and troubled.

"What do you mean?" he said. "Do you mean that you've really got—that there really is someone behind that screen whom you're asham—whom we mustn't see? Do you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Maitland, smiling steadily back at him; "yes, something of that sort. You mustn't look there."

Reverley, as if he saw too late how serious his silly joke had become, tried to laugh; but the women drew together, looking at each other significantly, and moved over towards the door.

"Oh, of course, in that case," murmured Mrs. Reverley, "we'd—best be going on at once. We—came in as a—sort of lark. Of course, we'd no idea—we're very sorry, and —are you coming, Bob?" Her husband looked from her to Mr. Maitland, and back again, and for a moment he seemed to hesitate; then he took up his hat and followed the others out of the door.

Jimmy Ross, from the middle of the room, glanced up at his chum's face, and it was very white and a bit drawn.

"My—fault, I expect," he said, in a low

voice—"partly, anyhow. I shouldn't have brought them here; but I—I didn't expect—I never thought——"

Maitland moved a pace towards him, but Jimmy Ross, avoiding his eye, turned and went out of the room.

"Jimmy, too!" said Mr. Maitland, under his breath.

He heard their voices out in the hallway beside the elevator-shaft, for, it seemed, Jimmy Ross had forgotten to close the doors behind him. He heard them talking together, and if his faculties had not been dulled past comprehension, he might have wondered why they were laughing, and why, after a moment, Jimmy Ross said—

"Oh, that's enough! Let's go back now. Didn't it work, though?—didn't it?"

Then, when from the voices it seemed as if the people were returning, the girl dashed suddenly out from behind the big Japanese screen, and was across the room and in the little corridor before Maitland could stop her. He heard her close the outer door with a bang and draw the bolt to fasten it. Then, in another instant, she was inside the room again, and had closed the inner door, and stood leaning against it, breathing very fast. Her eyes were wide and excited, and she seemed on the verge of hysteria. She stretched out one arm towards Maitland, where he stood in the middle of the room.

"Listen!" she cried swiftly. "Please listen at once and—and don't interrupt. I've got to tell you a lot, and there's—almost no time to tell it in." She broke off for a moment with a little fit of hysterical laughter.

"It's—it's all a—silly joke!" she cried, and as she spoke, the people outside could be heard pounding on the other door and shouting to be let in.

"It's all a silly joke. I haven't stolen anyone's rings or anything. I'm not a lady's maid—I'm—Carolin Ross—no! please don't interrupt. We must let those people in, in a moment. Let me explain. Jimmy wanted to—play a joke on you, and they all—they all thought it would be a great lark. So we—fixed it up this way. They—didn't believe you'd do what you've done. They thought you'd weaken when they broke in here upon us, and save yourself—at my expense. I—thought you wouldn't. I *knew* you wouldn't! I said you'd do just what you've done, let them go away thinking what you thought they were thinking of you a few moments ago. I told them you'd do that rather than give up a woman who'd appealed to you for protection. They wouldn't believe it. Oh, do you know how glad I am? Do you? You're just what I thought you were. I want you to know how fine I think you are. There aren't many men who'd do what you've done. No! wait, wait! You may be as angry as you like. I don't care whether you forgive me or not for playing tricks on you. I've found out that there's one gentleman in the world who knows what chivalry is. *Can't* you see how glad I am?"

The people in the hallway pounded with their fists on the outer door and beat on it with walking-sticks, and Jimmy Ross shouted abuse through the keyhole, but the lady's maid stood against the wall inside, laughing and sobbing, with wide, glad eyes and very pink cheeks, and Gerald Maitland stared at her from the hearthrug. Then at last, when the truth had beaten its way through his dulled consciousness, he came slowly across the room, and a wondering smile began at his lips, and his eyes widened—grew to a certain glad excitement like the girl's. He put out his hands against the wall, one on either side of her head, and looked into her face till her eyes dropped.

"Oh, girl, girl!" said Maitland, in a half-whisper, "what do I care about anybody's silly jokes? I looked into that little gold locket. Do you hear me? *I looked into that locket!*"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE LOBSTER'S "MUSICALE."

THE Lobster gave a *musicale*,
And though the day was wet,
Not one of all her gill-ded friends
Sent in a fish regret.

It was a noble gathering;
The Bloater (such a *swell!*
He had arrived from Yarmouth,
Where his valiant father fell)

Said it really was a pleasure
To stand within the pale
Of those who represented
The topmost fishy scale.

A FEW PARTING WORDS OF ADVICE.

FATHER (to son who is just going out in the world): And remember one thing: never you marry a girl as is richer than you. When I married your mother, I 'ad thirty bob, and she 'ad two pun' ten, and she's never ceased to throw it in my face ever since.

ON THE TUBE.

"Two for the Museum, please."

The Whale, of course, was queen of shape
(As everybody owned),
Though that need cause no wonder, for
By Nature she was "boned."

The Sturgeon, with a pouching waist,
Made everybody stare,
But what was fine to other folk
Was *caviare* to her.

The pale-complexion'd Oyster, his
Beard bedecked with pearls,
Shared with one Captain Cuttle Fish
The love-sighs of the girls.

Oh! 'twas a noble company,
But ere the sun went down,
Some had gone to *Eton*
By way of London Town.

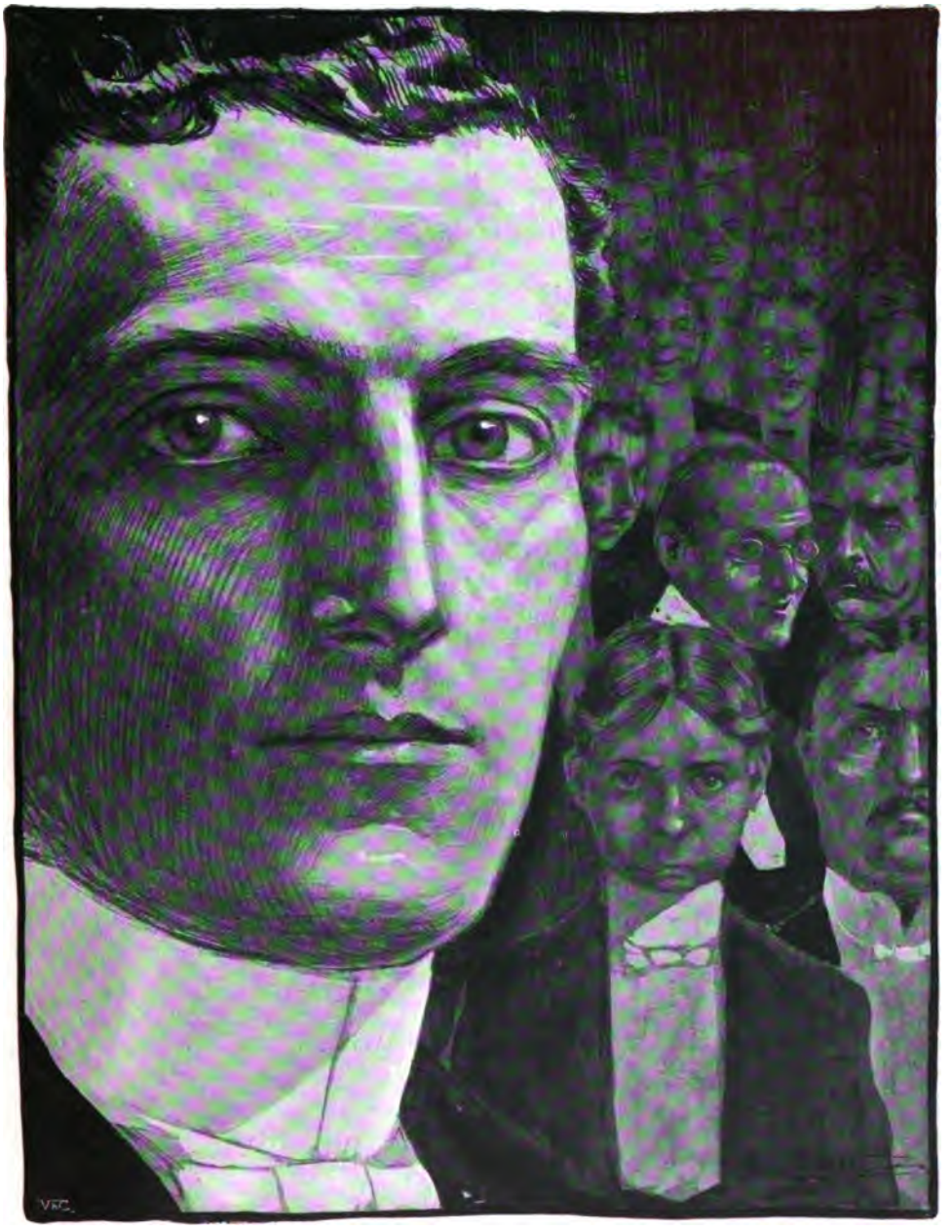
Hazel Phillips Hanshew.

SHE: Yesterday you passed me in the street without even looking at me. You know you did.
HE: My dear girl, if I had looked, I couldn't have passed!

"I CAN't see why they speak of the wisdom of the serpent."
"Well, you never heard of a serpent getting its leg pulled, did you?"

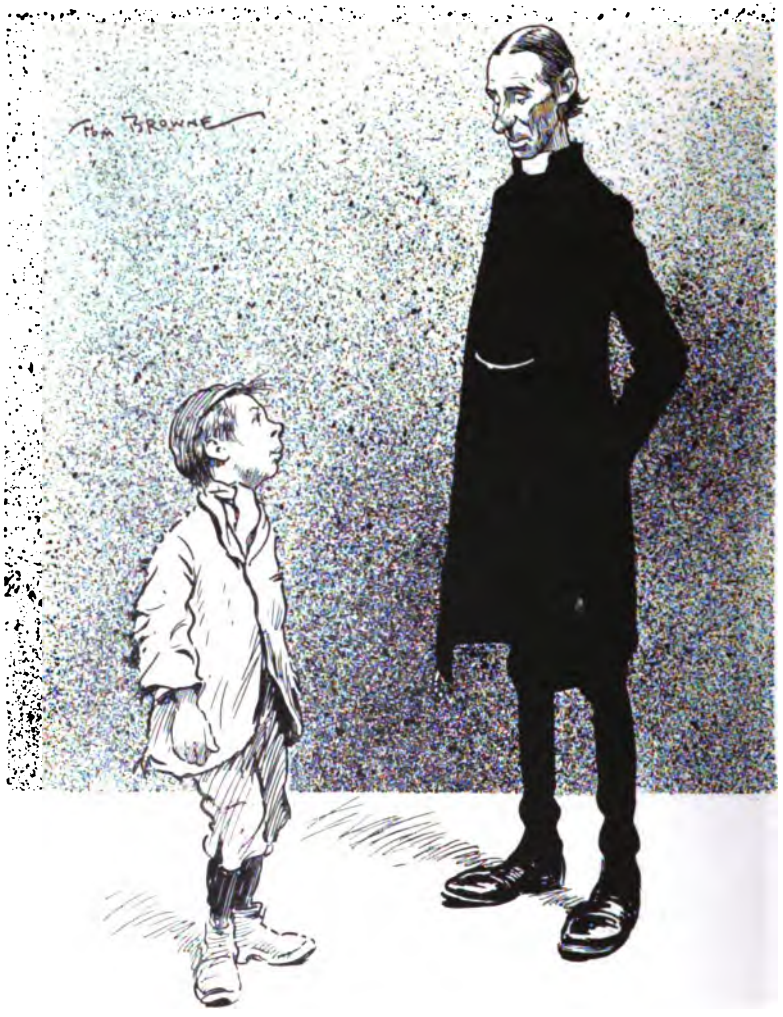
THE SENSE OF PROPORTION:

1. THE WORLD FROM *HIS* POINT OF VIEW.



THE SENSE OF PROPORTION:

2. THE WORLD FROM *HER* POINT OF VIEW.



MENTAL ARITHMETIC.

TEACHER: Now, Billie Spriggs, supposing your father was to give your mother fifteen shillings on Friday, and ten shillings and sixpence on Saturday, what would she have?

BILLIE: Hysterics.

SKIMPER: How do you like the tobacco in that cigarette?

WAGS: Ah, then, it is tobacco! Oh, very much indeed.

"ISN'T this a charming picture of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, my dear?"

"Yes; so true to life! He's sitting down, and she's standing up."

TOOTLES (who has just had his photo taken): Well, what do you think of it?

WIFE: Beautiful, dear. I wish you would look like it, sometimes!

"THE day is done," murmured the Owl sentimentally.

"Who did it?" asked the Bat with ungrammatical levity.

"I'm not sure," answered the Owl sweetly, "but I saw the moon take a rise out of it."

"GRANDPA, are there any coloured angels in heaven?"

"Why do you ask, my son?"

"'Cause, every Sunday when the minister's preachin', he says: 'Angels and dark angels.'"

NELLIE: I wish I had that sixpence back that I spent for chocolates.

MOTHER: What would you do with it?

NELLIE: Buy more chocolates, of course.

SHE: My father's been put on the Jury List.

HE: Pooh! Mine's got on the Black List.

TEACHER: Why was the Bible given us?

INTELLIGENT PUPIL: To tell us what to do on Sunday.

TEACHER (wearily): Tommy, you have absolutely nothing in your head this morning!

TOMMY: Excuse me, miss, I have a cold.

NERVOUS YOUNG MAN: Is Miss De Vere at home?

OFFICIOUS FOOTMAN: Yes, sir.

NERVOUS YOUNG MAN: Is she engaged?

OFFICIOUS FOOTMAN: Not yet, sir.

TOO SLOW FOR WORDS.

HE (who has been rejected): You don't dare say "No" again.
SHE: Why not?
HE: Because two negatives make an affirmative.
SHE: Not with a woman.
HE: How many does it take with a woman?
SHE: One.

DESIRE.

O THE ripe, red apple which handily hung
And flaunted and taunted and swayed and swung,
Till it itched your fingers and tickled your tongue,
For it was juicy and you were young!
But you held your hands and you turned your head,
And you thought of the switch which hung in the shed,
And you didn't take it (or so you said),
But tell me—didn't you want to?

O the golden chink and the sibilant sign
Which sang of honey and love and wine,
Of pleasure and power when the sun's ashine
And plenty and peace in the day's decline!
O the dream was schemed and the play was planned;
You had nothing to do but to reach your hand,
But you didn't (or so I understand),
But tell me—didn't you want to?

O you wanted to, yes; and hence you crow
That the Want To within you found its foe
Which wanted you *not* to want to, and so
You were able to answer always "No."
So you tell yourself you are pretty fine clay
To have tricked temptation and turned it away;
But wait, my friend, for a different day!
Wait till you *want* to want to!

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.

OF COURSE!

"AYE, laddie, when I see ye wi' that gun, I think o' yer faither an' the w'y he used to come hame wi' baith his cheeks a' swelled."

"But, auntie, it wud only be a'e cheek."

"Na', na', baith cheeks" (proudly). "His gun was a double-barrelled ane."

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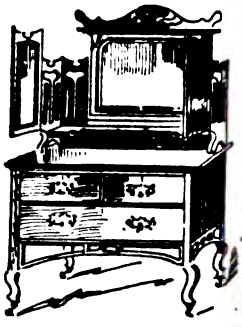

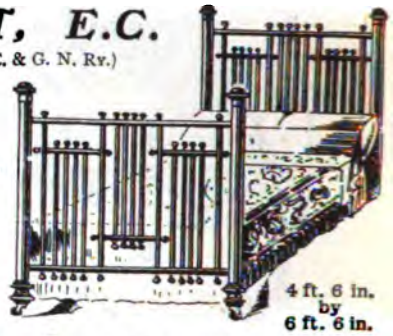

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